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Herrick Iron Works History Project

Stephen Gale Herrick

FROM STRUCTURAL STEEL TO THE ARTS

With an Introduction by
James D. Hart

Interviews Conducted by
Ruth Teiser
and
Lisa Jacobson
in 1988 and 1989

Since 1954 the Regional Oral History Office has been interviewing leading participants in or well-placed witnesses to major events in the development of Northern California, the West, and the Nation. Oral history is a modern research technique involving an interviewee and an informed interviewer in spontaneous conversation. The taped record is transcribed, lightly edited for continuity and clarity, and reviewed by the interviewee. The resulting manuscript is typed in final form, indexed, bound with photographs and illustrative materials, and placed in The Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, and other research collections for scholarly use. Because it is primary material, oral history is not intended to present the final, verified, or complete narrative of events. It is a spoken account, offered by the interviewee in response to questioning, and as such it is reflective, partisan, deeply involved, and irreplaceable.

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STEPHEN GALE HERRICK
JUNE 1990

Photograph by Michael Herrick

multi

Cataloging Information

HERRICK, Stephen Gale (b. 1909)

Businessman and book collector

From Structural Steel to the Arts, 1990, iv, 157 pp.

Family background and education; Herrick Iron Works: founding, 1921, by Stephen Scholes Herrick, to sale in 1960; recollections of bidding strategies, project financing, labor negotiations, wartime contracts, competitors; book collecting, bookbinding, music and theater; HEDCO Foundation founding, board members, and granting policies.

Introduction by James D. Hart, Director, The Bancroft Library.

Interviewed 1988, 1989 by Ruth Teiser and Lisa Jacobson. The Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

TABLE OF CONTENTS--Stephen Gale Herrick

INTRODUCTION by James D. Hart	i
INTERVIEW HISTORY	iii
BRIEF BIOGRAPHY	v
I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION	1
Parents and Grandparents	1
Childhood	2
Work After School	3
Oakland Technical High School	5
University of California, Berkeley	7
Engineering Studies	7
Student Life	8
Naval ROTC	9
II FATHER: STEPHEN SCHOLES HERRICK, 1870-1947	10
Early Work Experience in Steel	10
Vulcan Iron Works	10
Moore Drydock Company	13
Entrepreneurial Qualities	14
III HERRICK IRON WORKS: THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES	16
Founding, 1921	16
Shell Oil Contracts	18
Smaller Contracts	19
Financing Projects in the Twenties	21
Plant Expansion	22
Depression Years	23
Gale Herrick's Initial Responsibilities	25
Ironworkers and Field Crews	28
Workers' Safety	29
Employee Compensation	31
Bidding	32
Estimating	34
Division of Responsibilities Between Father and Son	36
Father's Management Style	37
Buying Steel	40
Government-Financed Projects	42
IV LABOR NEGOTIATIONS	45
Whitcomb Hotel Meeting (1932)	45
Representing the Interests of Structural Steel	46
Fabricators	
Negotiating Strategies	47
Competition from Non-Union and Overseas Operations	48

Labor Negotiation Committee	49
Union Demands and Concerns	50
Steelworkers vs. Ironworkers	53
Hiring Policies	55
Operating Engineers' Union	56
 V HERRICK IRON WORKS: THE LATE THIRTIES, FORTIES, AND FIFTIES	59
Hangar Doors and Other Complex Work	59
Prison Construction	61
Site Inspections	62
Board of Directors	62
Reinforcing Steel Business	63
Competitors	66
Wartime Contracts	68
Assuming the Presidency	70
Westvaco Phosphorous Plant	71
Reorganizing the Reinforcing Steel Department, Key Personnel, and Steel Shortages	73
Relocation to New Plant in Hayward	75
Competitors	77
Sale of Company	79
Hal Dornside	81
Industry Overview: 1930-60	83
 VI NON-BUSINESS ACTIVITIES	86
Book Collecting	86
Book Collectors Organizations	92
Bookbinding	95
Theatre Activities	99
Music Interests	102
 VII HEDCO FOUNDATION	106
Foundation's Beginnings	106
Pass-through Accounts	107
Funding for Health, Education, and Special Projects	108
Setting up the Foundation	110
Board Members	111
Advisory Committee	112
Recommendations Made by Board	112
Important Qualities in a Board Member	113
Influence of Board Member Interests on Grantee Selection	114
Grantee Selection and Application Process	115
Follow-up on Grantees	116
Size of Grants	117
Annual Board Meetings	118
Medical Grants	120
University Grants	121

Cultural Grants	122
Children's Welfare Grants	122
Managing the Foundation and its Assets	123
Long-Range Planning	124
Foundation's Relationship to the Community	125
Evolution of Foundation	126
 TAPE GUIDE	128
APPENDIX I--The Herrick Family Pioneers	130
APPENDIX II--Residences of Merritt F. Gale	134
APPENDIX III--History of Herrick Steel Company	136
APPENDIX IV--ROTC, UC Berkeley, 1927 and Later	151
APPENDIX V--Family Notes	155
INDEX	156

INTRODUCTION by James D. Hart

In this engaging account, businessman and book collector Gale Herrick's point of view makes rather pedestrian matters come very much alive. In Gale Herrick's words, what might have been the mundane particulars of an initial job in his father's iron works become engrossing details. Everything that he did, the events of a lifetime, in some cases reaching back fifty years, Herrick brings out with great clarity.

Gale Herrick graduated from Oakland Technical High School. From there he went to the University of California, where he discovered the humanities. He remembers well his introduction to the works of Shakespeare. However, his father, Stephen Scholes Herrick, insisted that his son become a student of engineering in order to fit into the family plan. The son, having chosen that technical discipline, became an honor student. As he declares, in his idiosyncratic and thoroughly enjoyable style, he "gained the hang of self-discipline."

The Herrick family business activities in structural steel fabrication come strongly alive in the oral history memoir because they are presented in a humane fashion. Gale Herrick brings to his account a sense of full life. There is drama in his father's steady determination to control his own investment and business obligations, and it becomes even more intriguing when Gale Herrick takes command.

Gale Herrick's continuing interest in the humanities is illustrated in the story of bidding on a job in Pocatello, Idaho. After a hard and successful day's work, he delights in the discovery that a local theater is doing the first production, a tryout, of Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman--a happenstance, but also a fine addition to his long-standing dedication to drama.

In the course of time, Gale Herrick removed himself from his business, a significant decision that he makes known to readers in a manner not only carefully informative but even delightfully frank as he declares, "We sold the assets and retained the proceeds." With that move in 1960 his long and successful business career concluded, and at that point the oral historian declares, "That takes us to the end of this section... The next will focus on your extracurricular activities." To that prospect his response is, "Oh, good. I'll enjoy that."

The "extracurricular activities" aspect of Gale Herrick's narrative is enjoyable not only to him but to his readers. Pursuit of the subject reveals that he is possessed of remarkable erudition, and his reading choices range through Joyce's Ulysses and, more than once, Proust's Remembrance of Things Past. The carefully culled work of Thucydides, Gibbon, and "all of Chaucer," such solid literary interests appear to me remarkable for a man who has spent his days in the construction business. But he is a man of breadth.

The subject matter of the last chapter on book collecting and personal book binding, contemporary theater, and his interests in music are all very engaging, but it is not merely their cultural significance that animates them. It is, rather, the charming though quietly-borne vivacity in participation, and then the clearly open expression on any matter in which he has been involved, that keeps this oral history an intriguing document all the way.

This oral history reveals the true nature of its subject. Reading it one gets the same sense that one does from the pleasure of a real life encounter with Gale Herrick. Here is a warm, bright, humorous man with fine and sensitive feelings who talks easily with people of various sorts, and whom I know to have generously helped accomplish all kinds of worthwhile activities.

James D. Hart
Director, The Bancroft Library

February, 1990
Berkeley, California

INTERVIEW HISTORY--Stephen Gale Herrick

Stephen Gale Herrick was interviewed in six sessions at his book-lined office in downtown San Francisco--home to part of his fine printing collection and bookbinding studio. In a preliminary interview on January 13, 1988, Mr. Herrick sketched his early years and career beginnings at his father's structural steel fabrication company. This provided important background information for a second interview on January 21, which gave a comprehensive chronological account.

The first four interviews document his family background and education and the evolution of Herrick Iron Works from its founding in 1921 to its sale in 1960. Mr. Herrick's recollections of bidding strategies, project financing, labor negotiations, and competitors illuminate the dynamics of a small entrepreneurial firm operating in a business dominated by three majors--Kaiser, Bethlehem, and U.S. Steel. Mr. Herrick was particularly eager to discuss his activities since retirement from business in book collecting, bookbinding, listening to music, and participation in theatre, which forms the subject of the fifth interview. The final interview covers his participation as a director on the board of the HEDCO Foundation, a small, mostly family-run philanthropic organization.

Mr. Herrick carefully reviewed his manuscript and was most helpful in selecting and identifying photographs. The appendix includes his written accounts of his family residences and the first four decades of Herrick Iron Works.

It was Mr. Herrick's wish that his friend and fellow bibliophile, the late James D. Hart, director of The Bancroft Library, write the introduction, which Professor Hart was pleased to do. Professor Hart had his notes and his rough draft underway, but illness precluded his completing the work. We thank ROHO senior editor Suzanne Riess for editing the introduction.

This account of the first forty years of Herrick Iron Works as it evolved from a small iron works into a major structural steel fabrication company is a significant piece in the history of Bay Area and Western industry. A companion oral history, Steel Construction in the West, with Harold W. Dornsife, who has carried on and expanded the company, brings the story up to date. We wish to acknowledge with gratitude Herrick Pacific Corporation's support in making this oral history possible.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons who have contributed significantly to recent California history. The office is headed by Willa K. Baum and is under the administrative supervision of The Bancroft Library.

Lisa Jacobson
Interviewer/Editor

August 1990
Regional Oral History Office
University of California, Berkeley

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

(Please write clearly. Use black ink.)

Your full name Stephen Gale Herrick

Date of birth January 20, 1909 Birthplace San Francisco

Father's full name Stephen Schol es Herrick

Occupation Executive Birthplace Louisiana
maiden

Mother's full name Mabel Elizabeth Gale

Occupation Housewife Birthplace Sacramento (?)

Your spouse Marion Schaller Herrick

Your children Stephen, Ann, Michael, Jerome, Andrea

Where did you grow up? San Francisco

Present community same

Education B.S. - UC Berkeley, 1931

Occupation(s) partly retired

Areas of expertise business management; fine hand bookbinding

Other interests or activities book collecting; music appreciation; reading

Organizations in which you are active Friends of Bancroft Library;

Board of Meyer Friedman Institute

I FAMILY BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION
[Interview 1: January 13, 1988]##

Parents and Grandparents

Herrick: My parents arrived in San Francisco just a hundred years ago. They came from New Orleans. My grandfather was a physician, and apparently neither successful nor particularly able. He was not successful in New Orleans, where the family was founded. I assumed that he came here because it was a new opportunity.

Teiser: So that was on your father's side. You've written up his family?

Herrick: I wrote up his family and residences.* I took my whole family around to the five residences in a bus a few months ago, and they were all bored. But I was not bored.

Tieser: Have you written up your mother's family also?

Herrick: No, that's to come.

Teiser: Where was your father born?

##This symbol indicates that a tape or a segment of a tape has begun or ended. For a guide to the tapes see page 128.

*See Appendix II.

Herrick: He was born in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi. He arrived here as a child. The [imaginary] picture that I like is the Pullman compartment, loaded with a father and mother and four children--the oldest of which was seventeen, or something like that--houseplants, and boxes of books, on a railroad coming to San Francisco.

Teiser: Were there books in your family? Was there lots of reading?

Herrick: My grandfather had a thought that if he bought a book, he thus knew the subject; so he bought a lot of books.

Teiser: Your father grew up in San Francisco, though?

Herrick: Yes, that's accurate, although he was a late teenager when he arrived. He was born in 1870, so he arrived at the age of seventeen.

Teiser: What was his name?

Herrick: Stephen Scholes Herrick.

Teiser: Was he an engineer to begin with?

Herrick: No. He bragged frequently that he never even finished the eighth grade, and he particularly used that fact in arguing with my mother that there was no reason whatever that I should go to college. My mother said I should, and they had a serious scrap on the subject. He finally compromised and said that if I must go to college I had to study engineering. So that's what I studied, civil engineering.

Childhood

Teiser: Let's go back to your birth date.

Herrick: I was born in 1909, seventy-nine years ago a week from today, at the final residence of these five residences, which still exists and which we visited, and where we found the owner, who was very happy to have us visit.

Teiser: Where is it?

Herrick: It's at 46 Alpine, which is near Yerba Buena Park. My children were always rather pleased that I was born near the Haight-Ashbury area. We stayed there from 1909 to 1917, at which time my father went to work at Moore Drydock. He had been working in a steel company in San Francisco. The earliest location of the Herrick Iron Works was immediately adjoining Moore Drydock Company.

Teiser: Which was where?

Herrick: At the estuary in Oakland, at the foot of Adeline Street. During that period I had the enjoyment of going on trial runs of new ships. Whenever they launched a ship and it was completed and ready to deliver, they had to take the ship out in the bay and out through the Golden Gate. Of course, the food was very good, and sailing on the ship was exciting. That's one of my memories of that era. I was eight or nine years old.

Teiser: That must have been a great thrill for a little boy.

Herrick: Yes, it was. And seeing the launching was very exciting, too. I attended all the launching and all the trial runs. It's interesting to me that I retain a friendship with both Joseph A. Moore, Jr., and with James Moore, his brother--there were two sons--and also with Jane, their sister. Jane Mock is in Los Angeles. Our apartment, which we occupied before we moved into the Sequoias, was immediately above Joe Moore's apartment. Another peculiar coincidence was that The Herrick Corporation, after I sold it, acquired the Gillig Company, which makes school buses, and Mrs. Joseph Moore is the daughter of Gillig, the founder of the company. So there's a funny interrelationship there too.

Teiser: Or else it's a small community of industrialists.

Herrick: Yes, that's true. And it was small, of course, once.

Work after School

Teiser: Did your father point you directly at your career?

Herrick: Yes, it was apparent that he did, although it wasn't as obvious to me, nor was it obvious that I should cherish it. Shortly after he moved from the Moore Drydock location to 18th and Campbell Streets in Oakland, he made it possible, or ordered me, to come after school and work at the plant. I did light work, such as painting and so forth.

Teiser: Moving a steel plant must not be a small job.

Herrick: It was not a small job, and my father was short of money. When he started the business he had a partner, because he always had a standard of not borrowing money. He dreamt of starting the business even before 1906, but he never would have started the business without having money in the bank. So it was necessary for him to associate himself with a partner. And he disposed of the partner at the end of the first year [laughs]. I don't know how and I don't know who the partner was. So that was one of his standards--that one should save money and not spend it until they have it, and so forth, which certainly would not be popular today.

Teiser: Probably not even possible.

Herrick: I think it's possible. I think there are probably some families who never use a credit card, and use their income when they have it.

Teiser: So you went to work in a small way?

Herrick: Yes, in a small way, and of course during the summer.

Teiser: How old were you when you went to work?

Herrick: In 1922 I would have been thirteen.

Teiser: Did you enjoy working?

Herrick: No. I remember getting the paint in my hair and eyes, and so forth.

Teiser: Did you get paid?

Herrick: I presume I did, yes.

Oakland Technical High School

Teiser: What did you enjoy when you were a youngster? What were your interests?

Herrick: I think I enjoyed school. After I looked at your outline* I recollect that while in high school I joined the football team and did rowing my last year in high school. The great experience in high school was having three superb teachers. One in particular influenced my life to a very great degree.

Teiser: This was Oakland Technical High School?

Herrick: Yes, Oakland Tech. Then we had one or two blacks, and now there are one or two whites in Oakland Tech.

Teiser: Who were your teachers?

Herrick: One teacher was a public speaking teacher, a man named Talcott Williamson. I even attended his funeral. The other two were a Miss Crandall and a Miss Chamberlain. They were both concerned about English as literature. One of them, I think Miss Chamberlain, used the Shakespeare Variorum, which was only just published at that time. They were all very impressive. I remember going to Williamson's home. One of the things he did as a teacher was to encourage students that he thought would appreciate it, so I visited his home occasionally. He had a print of a van Gogh on the wall.

Teiser: Had you been a reader since grammar school? Did you enjoy reading as a kid?

Herrick: Yes, somewhat.**

Teiser: Did your grandfather's library stay in your house?

Herrick: It was in the house that was owned by my father and mother when I went to college, but there was nothing much in the library of interest; very little, actually, of value or

*Of suggested subjects to be discussed in the interview.

**See also p. 86.

Herrick: interest. I don't know what I would think of it now, because you can see I collect fine print. That's why we have that [points to bookcase] and this and this.

Teiser: Fine print and exotic books, such as Flatland.

Herrick: Yes, Andy [Andrew] Hoyem's work, which, because it's in a metal case, scratches the adjoining books; so that's why it's up there.

Teiser: At least you don't have William Everson's big wooden--

Herrick: Granite and Cypress, no. No, I found I had to specialize. If I had started on Everson I would have stuck to it. I have several of his works, but not that one.

Teiser: I ask you about your literary interests because they have persisted in that they seem to have gone along parallel to your professional interests.

Herrick: Yes, it's apparent to me that my interest in Shakespeare was due to these fine teachers. I remember one of Williamson's favorites was William James, and recently I've been reading in the TLS [Times Literary Supplement], which I subscribe to, reviews of William James and comments about him. He's back as a popular figure; people are beginning to appreciate him, let's say.

So, it was Chamberlain and Crandall that led me into Shakespeare. I've always considered that a very important part of my life.

Teiser: I'm anticipating now--that led you to a later interest in the drama, I suppose?

Herrick: Yes. I was trying to relate my high school experiences to drama, and I can't do it. I don't think I was that interested. But I was interested in Shakespeare. Subsequently I availed myself of every opportunity in college and elsewhere to attend plays, attend the theater. I even took a summer course--I've forgotten the name of the UC professor who was famous for being a Shakespeare scholar.

University of California, Berkeley

Engineering Studies

Teiser: When you went to college you were able to both work and go to summer school, too?

Herrick: I didn't work when I went to college. Engineering is very demanding, as you know. During the four-year course you're required to take eighteen units all the time. Two summers out of the three you're supposed to go on a field camp, as it was called, which was in Marin County. That was very good discipline. We had to measure lines of five hundred yards to the thousandths of an inch, I remember. We measured the temperature and the tension on the steel tape, and things like that, to have it absolutely accurate. And unless we were accurate we didn't pass.

Teiser: Whom did you study with at Berkeley, particularly?

Herrick: As a senior I was in Dean Charles Derleth's class. He showed many slides; he was really not a very good teacher, in the sense that he relied so much on slides. Maybe I had him in my junior year, too, but certainly in my senior year. I always sat up front so I would stay awake, and then I volunteered to run the slide machine, which also kept me awake.

Teiser: Were you a good student?

Herrick: I was a very mediocre student at the beginning, and at the end I was an honors student.

Teiser: Was that because of an increase of interest, or just getting the hang of it?

Herrick: It was getting the hang of self-discipline, I think, and enjoying the university. I thoroughly enjoyed the university.

Teiser: I believe you told me that you spent a good deal of time just reading. Was the Morrison Room established by then?

Herrick: I'm looking over your head, because over your head is the complete Vale Press Shakespeare, all those green books near the white wire. Those were in Morrison, and they're still

Herrick: there; I checked that. I used to escape from engineering and go to Morrison and read a play or two out of those. That's one reason I've acquired those, because they had a significance to me; and they are beautiful. When BBC had their Shakespeare series, I followed the performance out of those because it's a pleasure to read a well-printed book to follow a performance. And they were very accurate, so accurate that they are unpopular, as you may have observed.

Teiser: Did you participate in any sports in college?

Herrick: Yes, only to a very limited degree. When I was a freshman I continued my rowing and I was on the freshman crew, which I found was more than I could handle with the heavy studies we had in engineering.

Student Life

Teiser: I think Jim Hart indicated that he hoped you would reminisce a little bit about student life in general at that time.

Herrick: It's difficult for me to do because engineers are isolated. I met very few people out of the engineering field. Late in my freshman year I did join a very small and choice group of students socially, which ultimately resulted in my first marriage. The base of this group was one son and a daughter of the head of the zoology department. So I got more deeply involved with the academic group. That was the group that encouraged me in reading and theater-going and so forth. I remember them all very well. I'm talking about a group of five or six or something like that.

Teiser: When I was an undergraduate at Stanford, engineers were known as very crude fellows who had no culture [laughing].

Herrick: Yes, exactly. And they didn't have any culture. I'm proud to report--and you'll find me bragging a good deal on this tape--in my senior year one of the professors in hydrolic-engineering, I guess, assigned a paper that was based on population in California cities. I went down to the library and looked up the current issue of some journal on communities in California which had the most recent 1930 census report. So I was able to write a paper on the most recent information,

Herrick: where the balance of the class wrote on ten-year-old information based on the prior census. I remember the professor asking how I got this, and I said I went down to the library; you know, it's that building down there that none of you ever go to. [laughs] I was very proud of that.

Naval ROTC

[Interview 2: January 21, 1988]##

Herrick: I was in the second class of the naval ROTC after it was first organized, and the commanding officer was Chester Nimitz. So I had a very nice experience there. I wrote it up because the present naval ROTC asked for a record of memories. I went to some trouble to put it all together, mailed it to them, and never heard from them for months and months and months. Finally I did, and they said they were going to publish mine and others, but I haven't heard a word about it. They even asked for money to finance the publishing [laughs].

Teiser: What years were you in the naval ROTC?

Herrick: I was in the class of '31, and I entered it in '28; so it must have been organized in '27. I became commanding officer, which is a big deal in the naval ROTC, [though] I don't think you wear those gold tassels that regular commanding officers usually wear.

Teiser: That ties in with something you mentioned: you said you didn't work in your father's company during college because you were too busy.

Herrick: I don't remember that I did, but I think it is probably true. I can't think if I did. I always took summer courses--for example I took accounting, I took Shakespeare with Professor Guy Montgomery--and, as I told you, I had to go on two engineering field trips. So my summers were pretty full.

Teiser: Did the naval ROTC take a lot of extra time during the year?

Herrick: Well, it didn't require that, but it offered cruises on naval vessels, and I availed myself of that, even to the extent of going to New York on a battleship in 1929.* It amuses me, because "Strange Interlude" is now being shown on KQED, and I saw the original production in New York in 1929.

*See also p. 24.

II FATHER: STEPHEN SCHOLES HERRICK, 1870-1947

Early Work Experience in Steel

Teiser: Let's start with a consecutive account of your father's work history. Had he started at a low level and gone up through the ranks?

Herrick: Oh, absolutely. I looked up his career, and he started in a company in Lincoln, California, which is near Folsom, I think.

Teiser: Where they had some iron mines, didn't they?

Herrick: The iron mines may have been involved, but the company was one that made sewer pipe. It was very heavy work. That was his first job in California. Next he worked in a pipe organ factory here in San Francisco, and finally in the Vulcan Iron Works, which is a name still in existence in Oakland, but that's completely unrelated.

Vulcan Iron Works

Herrick: Vulcan fabricated structural steel, but at that time they had to have quite a number of other products to survive. So they had a foundry and they made refrigeration machines for steamships, as well as what we call structural steel and ornamental iron. (It's called ornamental iron, but today it's made of steel.)

Teiser: It encompasses a number of processes, doesn't it?

Herrick: Yes.

Teiser: Was he a craftsman?

Herrick: No, no. He was a highly conservative, intelligent man who had a tremendous power of concentration. He was very hard-working, physically able to work many, many hours, many days in succession, and did so. I don't know what his responsibilities were at the Vulcan Iron Works. Obviously he started low on the totem pole, but he did reach the title of manager. I got this information from the city directory: he's classified as the manager in one directory, and then later on as assistant manager, or something of the sort, which may indicate some demotion or disagreement.

Teiser: It could indicate an error in the city directory.

Herrick: Very easily, yes. I used the city directories a good deal to begin with; that started me off. I saw them once when I visited the library. I thought, oh well, why not look up my father's family, and I got more and more interested. That's how I got all the residence locations. Based on the moves, I discovered, for example, that in a tiny house, the first house they moved into, there were four children and two adults.

Teiser: As a young family, was it a prosperous family?

Herrick: My own family was strictly middle-class, financially and every other way. You ask in your outline about his compensation at the Vulcan Iron Works: I have no idea what it was, none whatever; I can't even approximate it. But one of the most interesting things I discovered about him was the efforts he made, starting before April 1906. As I mentioned in the history, he felt that the owners of the Vulcan Iron Works were incompetent and that the company would probably expire if he didn't personally arrange for the move after the earthquake. So during 1906 he arranged for the move, and between 1906 and 1907 he made all those arrangements, got married, and built the 46 Alpine home--all



A staff portrait taken in the early 1940s. Seated from left are Stephen Gale Herrick; Stephen Scholes Herrick; Henry Oliphant, chief engineer; Charles Broyles, sales manager. Standing at far right is L.A. "Bud" Peck, sales; second from left is Ernie Richards, plant superintendent; third from right is Gordon MacKenzie, erection superintendent.

Herrick: in about a year and a half. That means that he designed the house himself, he financed it, contracted it himself, and so forth--all in about a year and a half, which is a demonstration of his degree of industry.

Teiser: Moving an iron works must have been a complex job.

Herrick: I should think so.

Teiser: Where did it move to and from?

Herrick: It moved from a site adjacent to the Palace Hotel to a site at the foot of Telegraph Hill. I've never actually located the site, although I vaguely recall visiting there. It was set right up against Telegraph Hill.

Teiser: Against the cliff there?

Herrick: Yes. I never heard him speak of it, but he must have realized that after this city was levelled by the fire, there would be a great deal of construction work, and so a great deal of opportunity. Before 1906, as I mentioned in the history, he discussed the hope for starting his own business. He delayed that because of the 1906 earthquake. So he was very happy to start his own company at the end of the war.

Teiser: Pictures of the 1906 earthquake, especially of the city hall, show all these bare steel frames.

Herrick: In the case of the city hall, it was exposed because the city hall was in the course of construction. The exposure was not the result of the fire.

Teiser: Wasn't it more clad to begin with?

Herrick: I doubt if it had gotten to the point of being clad, but I don't know. The city operated out of the old Whitcomb Hotel at the time of the building of the new city hall and at the time of the earthquake.

Teiser: At any rate, it occurred to me that it might have suggested to someone in the steel business at the time of the fire that there was the possibility for greater use of steel in construction.

Herrick: Well, it was partly a time, with or without the fire, when structural steel usage was growing very rapidly. Multi-story buildings with steel frames were fairly new in 1906.

Moore Drydock Company

Herrick: When the United States entered the war and we had a big shipbuilding program, my father resigned from the Vulcan Iron Works and went to work directly under Joseph A. Moore, Sr. My father was called Assistant to the Superintendent, which in most organizations--and this will interest you--is a minor position. In a shipyard, it's extremely important. The superintendent is the head of the whole yard, and he was assistant to the superintendent.

Teiser: At a fairly young age?

Herrick: Well, he would be about forty-seven. He was very, very hard working and quite capable. Not an easy person to have as a father; very demanding and seldom complimentary, or appreciative, let's say.

You have [on the outline] the impact of World War I on Moore Drydock Company. It was originally called Moore and Scott. It's quite a history, and I don't know enough about it prior to that time. Obviously, the World War had a tremendous impact. I don't know what the ultimate employment was. The power and influence of the government was very strong during the First World War, so that the government did a great deal of the management of the various shipyards. As I suggested in the history, Moore Drydock entered the structural steel fabricating business after the war--I don't think they'd been in it before--and they simply thought it was the natural thing, considering their handling of steel and their machinery and the skills of the people. Apparently they didn't feel successful at it. The company [Herrick Iron Works] was founded in 1921, and the war ended in 1918. So there had not been very much experience after the end of the war before Moore sold the department to my father.

Teiser: Are they very different operations, getting into structural steel and plate?

Herrick: Yes, totally different. They use the same material in different shapes; at that time this was particularly true.

Teiser: But the handling of it is different?

Herrick: Yes. Shipyards, then and now, use plate principally. Structural steel at that time didn't use any plate to speak of. The shipyards did use some shapes--that means I-beams and angles and so forth--but that wasn't an important part of their material compared to structural steel fabrication, which is all shapes.

I don't know the facts, but I suggested that Moore Drydock was only too happy to dispose of that department, partly because it wasn't successful and partly because they wanted to prove to the government, which was negotiating a settlement of all the operations of Moore Drydock, that some of their assets were worth no more than they had previously insisted they were worth. They sold the whole department to my father for a pittance and also leased him adjoining property.

Entrepreneurial Qualities

Jacobson: You mentioned that Moore Drydock had had trouble getting into the structural steel business. How was your father able to make a success out of it where Moore Drydock had failed?

Herrick: That's a comparison you find quite often in business. Moore Drydock probably employed, say, five thousand men in 1918 and early 1919. Suddenly they were confronted with running a much, much smaller business. Their experiences in operating shipbuilding--five thousand men and with the government looking over their shoulder all the time--were very different from that of fabricated structural steel. That's a principle you'll find often in business: where a large corporation is not profitable, a smaller corporation can do exactly the same thing; and because of their ability to make quick decisions and because of the direct influence of an able president or head man--or now called CEO--the smaller company can succeed. The outstanding case is the Nucor Steel Company, which is considered the most efficient steel mill in the world; the Japanese come to see how they do it.

Jacobson: It sounds like your father's quick decision-making was a critical factor in the success of Herrick Iron Works.

Herrick: Oh, definitely. Undoubtedly. Not only that, but his attitude toward the utmost thrift and saving and economy. In the industry--he knew this, and I knew it--he was known as "Second-hand Steve," because in order to get started he bought second-hand equipment--trucks and cranes and so forth.

Jacobson: What kinds of quick decisions would he have to make?

Herrick: Whether to meet a competitive price, for example; whether to bid on a certain job; whether to hire a man when he perhaps didn't need the man at that moment. Those are just examples; there are hundreds of them: whether to buy a second-hand truck or a new truck. As I say, he believed in spending money only when he had it.

III HERRICK IRON WORKS: THE TWENTIES AND THIRTIES

Founding, 1921

Teiser: Your father started his company with a partner, you said?

Herrick: Yes, but I have no idea of the identity of my father's partner in founding the business, nor why he got rid of him at the end of the first year; or maybe the partner got rid of the association with my father, I don't know. But the partner was missing at the beginning of the second year.

Teiser: Do you think they initially put in money together to found it?

Herrick: Yes. As I stated, my father would never have considered starting the business without having money in a savings account. And he apparently didn't have enough money, so he needed a partner, because he had a great opportunity at the time and couldn't afford to miss the opportunity.

Teiser: When he began the company, was it just a one-man organization?

Herrick: When I first observed the office, it consisted of my father, a man named Williams, and a woman named Etta Herman. Mrs. Herman remained with the company until long after 1960 when I retired. She was a very able purchasing agent. Williams, however, was, I guess, fired. One of my early jobs was looking at a lot of cancelled checks, and we discovered that he was, in effect, writing himself checks which were not justified.*

Teiser: Did the staff grow quickly?

*See page 27.

Herrick: No.

The plant was moved from a location adjacent to Moore Drydock at the foot of Adeline Street in Oakland, to the corner of 18th and Campbell streets. What motivated that change, I don't know. The company probably rented the property near Moore Drydock, and in the move to 18th and Campbell streets, my father acquired a quarter of a square. (That's a quarter of a block, which is a very small property for structural fabrication.)

Teiser: When did he move?

Herrick: He moved very shortly after the first year.

Teiser: He had established it in 1921?

Herrick: Yes. So he probably moved in '22 or '23.

Jacobson: Did he bring with him the employees from Moore Drydock's structural steel fabricating department?

Herrick: Yes, production employees, including probably a foreman or superintendent.

Teiser: How many production employees do you think there were then?

Herrick: Oh, I don't think there were more than twenty men in the shop, but that's just a guess. When I was working there regularly, I think the average employment of the shop was thirty-five or something like that.

My father's management style was a "one-man operation." His ability to devote time and energy and planning, and so forth, was ideal for a small business starting; but it was not the right thing twenty years later. I'm convinced that because of his policies he missed some great opportunities.

Teiser: Being too conservative?

Herrick: Yes. Particularly, the manner of having to have the money in hand was one of his most conservative policies.

Jacobson: What kinds of opportunities were there that he would be likely to pass up, given those policies?



Herrick Iron Works' shop employees



at the Oakland plant in 1925.

Herrick: Well, reinforcing steel, for example, which we didn't go into until much later. Or products other than structural steel.

Shell Oil Contracts

Herrick: During the twenties he was successful in as many contracts as you could possibly expect. During that period he had a contract for half the structural steel in the Shell Oil office building. And I mentioned the Shell Oil service stations; I remember the contract was for twenty of them, and there were others added later. It was a program of the oil companies to establish service stations on various corners.

Teiser: I'd like to ask about each of those. When you say he had a contract for half the steel in the building, does that mean someone else had the contract for other kinds of steel?

Herrick: No. When I say the steel in the building, I mean the steel frame. Moore Drydock had obviously gone back into structural steel fabrication, because the balance of the contract was done by Moore Drydock. They must have been the prime steel contractors, and must have simply subcontracted half the tonnage to the Herrick Iron Works.

Teiser: Why would they have done that?

Herrick: Possibly because the schedule was tight; they may have been very busy with other jobs, and the schedule might have been a very tight one that required somebody to help them out. Other than that, I don't know anything about the project.

Jacobson: Was the Shell contract originally Moore Drydock's contract?

Herrick: Probably, yes. Of course, there was a general contractor above that, whoever that was; I don't know.

Teiser: Did it cover the gas stations, too?

Herrick: No. The gas station contracts were taken directly from the oil companies, and I don't think we erected those; we may have. But we were required to furnish not only the steel frames and covering, but also wood doors and other fixtures for the lavatory department of the service stations.

Teiser: So you had to do some subcontracting, too?

Herrick: No, he did all the wood work himself. We did not subcontract the wood work.

Smaller Contracts##

Teiser: What other kinds of projects besides the Shell office building and service stations?

Herrick: A wide variety of small contracts, some of them probably not over one or two tons. If we got a hundred-ton contract, it was a day to celebrate. Two hundred and fifty tons was a big event for the whole year. It was very hard to plan ahead on the operation of the company, because it was able to do very large jobs, such as the Ford assembly plant in Richmond. That was very much larger than anything that we had before or anything that we had afterward until the middle of the war.

Teiser: How many tons was that?

Herrick: I think it was three thousand or something like that. I just don't remember. It was over one thousand, I know. Typically, up until the time I sold the company, we would have contracts that were so large they would distort the average operation, the average employment, or the financing, or anything else, because they were big lumps that came in. And when the big lumps came in, then we were very hesitant to bid on new work because we couldn't do the new work if we were successful bidders. That occurred during prosperous times.

Teiser: What was a typical small job?

Herrick: A typical small job would be, say, two steel beams in an apartment house. The steel beams would span the basement so that they could have parking in the basement. There'd be two steel beams and four columns and bracing between. That would add up to, say, twenty tons.

Jacobson: Were you doing a lot of construction for homes?

Herrick: Yes, some homes; very rarely. But our principal product was steel for buildings, fabricated steel for buildings. We never attempted to bid on the major multi-story buildings because we knew that Bethlehem or U.S. Steel would be successful. There were all kinds of stories. There was one in which Moore Drydock took a contract for an addition to what is now called UC San Francisco. The bidding was wild, and Moore Drydock was successful. A representative of one of the large corporations, and I really don't know which one--I can guess--took the general contractor out and said, "You know, Moore Drydock will have an awfully hard time getting the steel, and we're ready to produce right now."

That's an extreme example of the kind of competition we had. That probably occurred in 1947 or '48 when mild steel was very hard to come by, to the extent that they were actually stealing it off flat cars. Flat cars that were destined for one plant would be rerouted to another one and the steel would disappear [laughs]. There were lots of stories like that, too.

Teiser: How was steel used in houses?

Herrick: Only in the most elaborate of houses. I remember one that had eighteen tons of steel in it, but that's very unusual.

Teiser: But for structural?

Herrick: Yes.

Teiser: You had maintained a fleet of trucks of some sort, then, too?

Herrick: Yes. Again, as I mentioned before, my father frequently bought second-hand equipment and also was reluctant to subcontract. So instead of employing a truck operator to deliver the steel, he would have the truck equipment and make his own deliveries. And the same is true of truck cranes, which were used in the erection of steel. He always had his own crane and his own trucks for delivery, to the extent that he could possibly afford to. Sometimes he had to subcontract the delivery.

Teiser: Was that unusual in the steel business?

Herrick: It's hard to say whether it was usual or not. I think that the companies that I recall that were most like our company did the same thing; they had their own equipment.

Financing Projects in the Twenties

Jacobson: One thing you mentioned in the history was how difficult it was to finance projects in the twenties. Why was that so?

Herrick: There was a practice during the twenties that applied to some of the contracts that we took. Typically, a general contractor aspiring to build a large apartment building would find out who owned certain property; he would look around the city and find it, and on the tax record he would find out who owned the property. The contractor would buy the property, or they would encourage the owner of the property to finance the apartment building. Banks were willing, on the basis of just the real estate value, to finance the whole project. That was what today would be considered very flimsy financing. Of course, because it was flimsy the owner frequently couldn't keep up the payments.

The law then, and the law now, is called the lien law, in which a subcontractor who has not been paid can lay claim to the land and building. We threatened that occasionally. It was a very vicious threat to a contractor or to an owner; the owner would lose the property, and the contractor would lose his security. I guess we made the threat once or twice a year, perhaps.

Once we made the threat and we ended up owning a skating rink out near the San Francisco beach. Another time when we made the threat we developed an enemy in the general contractor, who would never talk to us or allow us to do any work for him ever again. And we were only too happy at his stand. I remember his name very well [laughs].

Jacobson: I would think that would be something you could think about before you made the threat--risking future jobs.

Herrick: Yes, as much as you can. But it's hard to investigate those things, and we were not qualified, nor should we be qualified to know whether, for example, a skating rink was justified



Herrick Iron Works shop employees, Oakland plant in 1931.



The office building of Herrick Iron Works in Oakland, designed by Miller and Warnecke.

Herrick: out near the beach in San Francisco at that time. We may have been hard up for work, or maybe a very friendly contractor would beg us to bid on it. But we might have a reason to supply this job and just keep our fingers crossed that it would be paid for.

The lien law stills exists, and it's an important protection. Of course, a small subcontractor can't afford to pursue it, but, as I say, structural steel was often a very large portion of the general contract and of the value of the building. So we were usually able to pursue the lien route if we had to. And occasionally we did, but only in one case do I recall our ending up with an actual piece of property.

Plant Expansion

Teiser: Did the plant itself increase in size in the twenties?

Herrick: It must have. If you picture a rectangle, we had one corner, just about a quarter of a rectangle, and we added the other three quarters one by one and developed the additional plant. Finally we jumped across the street and added a lot in that direction, too. I can't recall when that property was acquired. The office finally was across the street.

In fact, when I entered the business the company was in the midst of fabricating the Ford assembly plant, and at that time a temporary building had been built across the street from our plant. That was the drafting room, the place where the steel details were being drawn. I remember in my senior year the assignment was to design and draw a hundred-foot railway bridge. Another student and I stayed up all night in that temporary building and made all the designs and submitted the report at the last minute, of course.

Teiser: You said that Ford assembly plant is in Richmond.

Herrick: Yes. It's now leased to the University of California, and it's used as an adjunct to the main library. It was vacant for many, many years. I don't know when Ford moved out; probably at the beginning of the war.

Herrick: That was the building that we supplied the steel for. It was not yet complete when I went to work in the fall of 1931, so he must have signed the contract in '30, perhaps. It was a much larger contract than anyone could imagine he could handle, but he handled it very well and profitably.

Depression Years

Teiser: In 1929, what happened to the steel industry?

Herrick: Well, of course, in the middle of 1929, say July, we were operating normally and we were busy. The stock market collapse in October 1929 affected the future but didn't affect the immediate operation. The nature of construction is that there's a long period between planning, financing, designing, and actual construction. So there was a lag in which everything that had been planned in the middle of 1929 and earlier extended up to about 1932. Thirty-two was the very bottom. I was married in June 1932, and that was the time the plant had only one man in the shop. Well, it had two men, really, the superintendent and a maintenance man.

Teiser: You went into the business in 1931?

Herrick: Yes, I graduated in May and went to Europe for two or three months, and immediately on return I went to work for the company. Eighty percent of my class in engineering went to work for the State of California, designing the Bay bridges.

Teiser: You'd travelled a good deal by then, had you?

Herrick: No, that was my first visit to Europe.

Teiser: You'd been in New York, you said.

Herrick: Yes, I'd been to New York. Well, yes, considering my naval travel, I had been to Hawaii, to Seattle and Vancouver, and then to New York. That was a great privilege. I don't know whether they still do that. The process is very simple: you find out where the ships are going, you go to the commanding officer and get permission, and if he says there's room you board the ship, and there's no cost or anything.

Teiser: Did you have duties?

Herrick: Oh, yes. I was assistant to the assistant navigation officer on the U.S.S. Texas going to New York. I learned a lot about navigation, too.

Teiser: So you came out of college into not much of a world--

Herrick: I was very lucky to get a job, you see. I remember negotiating with my father, and he said, "I really shouldn't hire you and I shouldn't pay you anything if I hire you. But I will; I'll pay you--" I think it was fifteen dollars a week. And I got married on that in 1932. I still have my account book. The big event of the week was Saturday, when we had lamb chops, and they were fifteen cents apiece [laughs].

Teiser: What was the labor situation in the steel industry at that time?

Herrick: It was non-union. Again, you have to differentiate between steel workers and steel fabricators. In labor the steel workers are an entirely different group of people, with different skills. So the steel workers' union was commencing to influence the steel fabricating field, and ultimately they did. When I joined the company in 1931, the only union employees that we had were field ironworkers. At that time my father said that in order to learn the business I should become an ironworker. Because he was friendly, I guess, with the ironworker business agent, I was allowed to join the union and to work as an apprentice. For three months-- it would be nice to say three years, but actually it was three months--I worked as an ironworker, doing all the business of tossing red-hot rivets and climbing around the steel frames.

I remember on one building there was just a single steel beam to walk across. It was very narrow, and I walked across it; I wouldn't think of doing that now. My mother caught me doing that once. She was bringing my lunch to the job--which was embarrassing, but that's what she was doing--and when she saw me walking on this steel frame she shifted into high and ran right down to the company and said, "Stephen, you've got to take him off that job." [laughs] That was the end of my career as an ironworker.

Herrick: But as a result of it, I would guess that there are still ironworkers today that call me Gale. My relationship with the union and with the men was very good, to the extent that commencing in 1932 I was involved in labor negotiations until I sold the company in 1960. I enjoyed the labor negotiations very much. Interestingly, and worth recording, is the fact that the ironworkers' union negotiations in 1932, or perhaps 1933, involved asking for a reduction in wages. The risk they were taking if they didn't reduce wages was that they would lose the jurisdiction, that employers would be employing non-union ironworkers.

Teiser: That's generally what employers plead, isn't it?

Herrick: Yes.

Teiser: Did the suggestion come from the employers or from the employees?

Herrick: No, it came from the union. People don't believe that, but I was present when it happened.*

Teiser: The year after you started, then, you started in on the labor negotiations.

Herrick: Yes.

Gale Herrick's Initial Responsibilities

Teiser: What was your position as you entered the Herrick Iron Works?

Herrick: I think immediately my father wanted me to do ironworkers' work; that's construction out on the job. Two jobs I remember working on. One was the Girls' High School (San Francisco) gym, which is now on Geary Boulevard near Scott. I pass by it often--I live near there now--and I always look at it with fresh feeling of memories. The other one was the Exposition Building in Oakland, which no longer exists. It was across the street from the Oakland Auditorium, and I guess it was the equivalent of Brooks Hall in San Francisco. It was on that

*See also p. 45.

Herrick: job where my mother saw me walking across a beam twenty-five feet above the ground, and the beam was about three and a half inches wide [laughs]. That was when she shifted into high gear and went right down to the company and said, "Stephen, you've got to take Gale off that work." From then on I worked in the office. I did steel detailing and I ran errands.

Teiser: What is steel detailing?

Herrick: That's the working drawings. The building starts with a careful engineering design by an engineer and an architect employed by the owner. In order to produce the steel frames in the shop you have to take that design drawing and draw a diagram of each piece with the holes in it, the length, and any fitting pieces. I did that.

I remember I was often called upon to take the paper tracings--the drawing was in pencil--two or three times a week on an SP [Southern Pacific] red train up to the middle of Oakland and have them blue-printed at a shop there and brought back. So I proposed establishing our own blueprint printing facilities, which we did, and then we didn't have to deliver them and pick them up, or wait for them in Oakland.

Teiser: When did you establish that?

Herrick: I think very soon after I started running errands [laughs].

Teiser: Your father took your suggestion?

Herrick: Yes. That's a good point. Either he did, or the chief engineer did, or both. The blueprinting process was very different from the present photocopy method. It was a chemical process, and you had to have two redwood tanks-- one was water, I guess, and the other one was some chemical. You had to put the print through the chemical tank, and then hang it up. It was quite a tedious business.

Teiser: And fairly expensive equipment, wasn't it?

Herrick: No, it would not be the equivalent of the present photocopying machine; it would be cheaper.

Teiser: But it required somewhat skilled operators, I seem to recall.

Herrick: Well, it's a skill easy to develop. I guess nobody does it now; I haven't seen or heard of making real blueprints.

Teiser: You made, then, one early contribution.

Herrick: Yes. But the point I made in my own writings about my education was that my study of engineering was seldom applied to my employment. The steel detailing, of course, is not done by civil engineers; it's done by skilled draftsmen. There was some design involved, very little, and that was engineering. But what I soon realized I was lacking was any training in business administration.

Teiser: If you hadn't had an engineering education, would you have understood all that was going on around you?

Herrick: Oh, I think so. In our total employment I think we had only one trained engineer. I don't think the chief engineer had a degree in engineering; he may have had. What went on around me was the design and fabrication of structural steel, and design was done by someone else. We very seldom had an opportunity to design a structure ourselves. If we did, we then had the exclusive right to bid on it. In other words, the bid of the steel included the design. Sometimes that was the practice.

I remember distinctly another of my first duties. My father said that something was going wrong in the office, and I was to look at all the checks that had come in during a two-year period and see what I could find. It turned out that Mr. Williams, who was authorized to sign checks, had written ironworkers' checks. These ironworkers are field men, so they had little contact with the office. Ironworkers' work is always intermittent; a man might work one or two weeks and get paid a week's wage, and another week's wage. Williams would write a check for a third week's wage, and then he would take that down to the bank and say that he had made an error, or that the ironworker had asked him to cash the check, and because Williams was authorized to sign checks, the bank cashed the checks. So he would put this check down in the record and pocket the money. His employment didn't last very long, but I didn't replace him. I did work in the office, but not in his job.

Teiser: You successfully found that out.

Herrick: Yes.

Ironworkers and Field Crews

Teiser: The ironworkers you are speaking of, did they work in the plant?

Herrick: No. In our case, when our shop people became organized, it was the ironworkers' union that organized them. When I entered the industry, the ironworkers' union was exclusively field men, men out on the job.

Teiser: What did they do?

Herrick: They hoist steel and connect it, and also paint it, and weld it nowadays; then they riveted it. The big change during my lifetime was from riveting to bolting and welding. Now they have what are called high-tensile bolts, using a pneumatic impact wrench, which are just as good as a rivet. And they still make a noise like driving rivets, but not quite as bad.

Teiser: Your father's company carried out the actual construction also?

Herrick: Yes. Some companies did not have field crews, but we always had field crews. The field crews erected the steel on the site, at the building. That was the work that I was doing when I was an apprentice.

Jacobson: Were the field crews independent contractors?

Herrick: No, they were employed for the job, sometimes just for a couple of days, sometimes for two or three months. Gradually, when you found a very able man you would attempt to furnish him continuous employment. It was always a matter of negotiation regarding wage rates, because the union quite properly said, "Our men don't work steadily, forty hours a week." Many of them did, but many of them did not. Consequently the hourly wage was higher than it was in the shop or in some other industries, because it's a very dangerous job and intermittent. It's interrupted, for example, by heavy rains, or the failure of delivery of steel, or even some simple thing like a delayed decision on the part of the owner. So the men lose a day or two or three; it's a tough job.

Workers' Safety

Herrick: I say it's dangerous: there's an actual way to measure the danger. In workmen's compensation insurance there's a rate for each trade, and the ironworkers' rate was second only to building wreckers. I had the unpleasant duty during the thirties of telling widows that they had lost their husbands on steel construction, at least on two occasions, maybe three. Another parallel job I had was defending the company against claims of gross negligence. The Industrial Accident Commission, as stimulated by the union--and the widow was stimulated by the union--would sue us for gross negligence because that would double the compensation. I frequently had to appear before the Industrial Accident Commission. And I always won [laughs]. See, I told you I was going to compliment myself.

Teiser: Was your father very safety-conscious?

Herrick: Somewhat. I became very safety-conscious, and as long as I was with the company; up to my retirement and the sale of the company, I was on the Safety Committee. Well, maybe not at the very end, but I stayed on the Safety Committee and organized it and stimulated it for decades.

Jacobson: When did the Safety Committees get started?

Herrick: It's hard to remember. They got started, I suppose, about 1935 or 1936.

Jacobson: Was it in response to an accident?

Herrick: No. The committees were a fairly new thing in those days, and one of our efforts was to employ a safety consultant, a safety engineer. They were very rare. Now they're not, of course, with OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration], for example. OSHA has jobs to offer if a man says he is a safety engineer. In those days safety engineers were very rare, but we did find one very able man. I've forgotten what his career was; he was well-established in the field. I was very proud of the company's safety record. Some fatalities are unfortunately normal in steel construction.

Teiser: Do you think the general interest in safety was partly in response to the Depression-period interest in worker welfare?

Herrick: Yes. Oh, sure. It was to keep down costs, to avoid misery, and to avoid creating widows.

Teiser: I think industrial companies were much more cavalier earlier, in the nineteenth century.

Herrick: Oh, yes, no question about that. There were times when they appeared to be completely indifferent to safety.

Jacobson: Did the Safety Committee have any sort of worker education program?

Herrick: Yes.

Jacobson: What did that involve?

Herrick: It involved learning how to lift heavy objects, insisting that they wear masks when they spray paint, and things of that sort. But there was no actual meeting of classes or anything of that sort.

Teiser: Did the unions themselves have representations on--

Herrick: No, but they encouraged the Safety Committee.

Teiser: Insurance companies must have--

Herrick: Oh, yes. I think it was from the insurance company that we got the safety engineer's name. The insurance company didn't meet with us, however; they might have in larger corporations, but in our case not. We were never very big. During my whole career, the most employees we ever had was 350, and that was rare.

Teiser: I remember Kaiser Company had many safety engineers.

Herrick: Oh, yes, they did. They were very safety conscious.

Teiser: The Depression really put a different face on everything. I suppose since you hadn't been active before, it wasn't so clear to you.

Herrick: No, that's true.

Teiser: But it certainly must have changed life for all workers.

Herrick: Oh, definitely. There was no unemployment insurance, and there were very few opportunities for welfare; they didn't eat, and they were evicted from their residences and so forth.

Employee Compensation

Teiser: There certainly wasn't any job security of any kind.

Herrick: No, none whatever. As I say, later on when it developed that an individual was a very capable person, he was told that he would never miss a day's work and was given continual employment, in the Japanese fashion, perhaps.

Teiser: Was there a minimum wage?

Herrick: No, not a government minimum wage.

Jacobson: Was it an open company policy such that all the employees knew that if they showed excellent performance, they would be guaranteed a certain amount of job security?

Herrick: No. It was not announced. They could observe it, but it was never announced. And maybe we didn't make it known quite as directly as I stated, that we told the very excellent worker that he would never miss a day. We probably never did that.

But another effort I made, I remember, which became very complex, concerned overtime pay. Sometimes in industrial work an area has to be in operation from Monday to Friday, but it needs repairing and reconstruction; so the crews would work Saturday and Sunday, and sometimes twelve hours a day. Then the journeymen--those are the basic workers; there are the apprentices below the journeymen--the journeymen, the foreman, and the superintendent would get double pay. They would get forty-eight hours pay for a weekend's work sometimes, and then the journeyman's pay would far exceed what the superintendent was getting in salary. I always made an effort to see that the superintendent was always paid more than the highest-paid journeyman, which wasn't easy to do under those rules. Of course, the

Herrick: superintendent didn't get any premium; if his crew worked over the weekend he had to leave home and go and look at the work and see that it was being attended to. But he didn't get any premium for that. The worker did, because those were the union rules, the union agreement.

Teiser: Were there other titles like superintendent and assistant superintendent?

Herrick: No, those were the titles in that department. The apprentice--we always encouraged apprentice work--the journeyman, the foreman, the assistant superintendent, and the superintendent. There would not necessarily be an assistant, but usually there was. They, like the superintendent, would be salaried, and of course would get continual pay.

Bidding

Teiser: How would Herrick Steel go about getting contracts?

Herrick: By bidding. The process then, and probably now, is to subscribe to journals and announcements that come out weekly. They are in a sense gossip sheets, in which they might have said in those days that Shell Oil was proposing to establish service stations throughout the state. On a lead like that a salesman would go to Shell Oil to find out particulars. For example, the essential bid announcement would say that the design was being performed by the company engineering department or by some architect or engineer, and the salesman goes to find out all he can about it--find out who is interested, what general contractors are interested in bidding. There are always friendly and unfriendly general contractors, and there were also contractors to whom we would never bid at all because we'd had a bad experience with them, either slow pay, or something of that sort.

Teiser: Were there some that you had close relationships with?

Herrick: Oh, yes, absolutely. Later on we had a "star" salesman who was almost a relative, and his custom was to become as friendly as he could with the whole office, particularly the receptionist, in each office, and he knew them by first name. Through the receptionist he could find out what steel contractors might have come in or telephoned, and so forth. He was a good detective.

Jacobson: Were you ever invited to make a bid?

Herrick: Yes. The invitation was the important thing. Sometimes the steel contractor would prepare the bid and let it be known that he was prepared to submit a bid. Bidding, of course, was scheduled; it was a certain day and hour--sometimes not, but typically it was scheduled. Sometimes we were invited even to the extent that it was understood that our bid would be the exclusive bid, so that the work could proceed faster, you see.

By inviting in advance the general contractor and the steel contractor--usually the steel contractor was the major subcontractor--the schedule might save two months between the completion of the engineering drawings and the beginning of construction. So sometimes the invitation was a matter of speeding the job up; or during periods of shortage of material, when fabricating plants were very busy and steel from the mills was very hard to come by, an early commitment might be very valuable. That was the condition about 1947 or 1946, and may have been the condition in the late twenties, I don't know. It probably was.

Teiser: Most bids were not competitive?

Herrick: No, most bids were highly competitive. It was rare for them not to be competitive. Very rare.

Teiser: Were they usually awarded to the lowest bidder?

Herrick: Usually they were, and when they were not the various bidders would want to know why they were not. If a general contractor consistently failed to give the contract to the low bidder, he might be boycotted because we would know he was far more friendly with a competitor than he was with us. And if we submitted to him a bid, our bid would routinely be offered to the competitor, to meet or not meet. Of course, as you can guess, sometimes we would submit a very low bid and force them to meet it and damage our competitors [laughs].

Teiser: So the bidding was an intricate part of the business.

Herrick: Oh, very much so. I don't know the condition now; I'm sure it's true on medium-sized jobs. At present with The Herrick Corporation, with its reputation and its capacity, when

Herrick: large projects are developed, the general contractors who are going to bid approach The Herrick Corporation early and say, "Do you think you will be able to bid, and if you will, may we have your bid?" That's a very important invitation. They can't go to American Bridge, and they can't go to Bethlehem, and they can't go to Kaiser, because these large steel mills have abandoned fabrication. This is the present condition. For the large structures being built in the City, for example, they have to be sure they're going to get a bid from a competent steel contractor.

Estimating

Herrick: The skill in winning the contracts consisted in choosing the right type of project to make an estimate. The estimate-making was more art than science; it was very difficult to make some estimates. All estimates went through my hands. In estimating there's what's called the "quantity takeoff," in which they can measure the tonnage of steel to be supplied. But then the problem is to estimate the cost of fabricating and the cost of erecting the steel, influenced of course by the competitive situation and the current need for a contract by the steel contractor. When you didn't have one, you bid a very low price, which was a vicious thing, of course. But it did happen and no doubt still does.

Then the sales director or the salesman in charge would promise the bid to a general contractor. The owner would have scheduled the bid opening for a certain hour and a certain place. All of the salesmen from all of the steel contractors and other sub-contractors, such as painting or concrete or other materials, would actually be present. A skillful salesman, and we did have a very skillful salesman, would find out what steel bids general contractors had. We would meet those bids, and they in turn would meet our bids; so it was an escalation downward. We might say that our minimum price was \$100,000, but we found that because we needed the job badly we would have to bid \$95,000, and so forth. Even then we might lose the job because a competitor might bid \$94,000.

Jacobson: Was there a team who worked together to do your estimating, or did you do it all by yourself?

Herrick: During the time we are talking about, which is the mid-thirties, I did it all by myself, subject to my father's direction and observation and checking. It's an art; it's very difficult. The vast amount of fabrication is simple enough--cutting off mill lengths of forty, sixty, or sixty-five feet long. You cut off a piece that fits the bill, and that's plain cutting, you see. And if you're riveting you punch the steel and you also cut small angles to connect the beam to the columns and so forth. As long as the engineer used straight angles and uniform lengths and so forth, it was easy to make a quantity takeoff, and the estimating was easy, relatively. But it's when they got fancy with curves or angles or other variations that it was not so simple.

Jacobson: Would you take into consideration who your competitors were, and what the market looked like at the time?

Herrick: Oh, yes. The sales department had the responsibility of finding out who was hungry and who was bidding low prices. By hungry I mean who lacked work and would do anything for a contract. We also knew what contracts were suitable to different companies. We made a distinct effort to seek the most complex jobs we could. I remember during my career our Ferry Building here had a very substantial change in the interior, involving rearrangement of floors and spaces. I think the contract was four or five hundred tons. We made every effort to get that because we knew that the big steel companies wouldn't be able to pay the close attention to that one that we could. We got the contract and it was a profitable one.

Jacobson: Was it an ongoing task for the sales department to keep their eye out on all this?

Herrick: Absolutely, and to know the personnel, too, to know the character of the people.

Jacobson: What about any larger market analysis that you did?

Herrick: You mean outside of this area?

Jacobson: I'm thinking of any other factors aside from what your competition was doing, like what the economy looked like, or what the government was doing at that particular time.

Herrick: No. I read the Wall Street Journal carefully and other sources of information, and I soon discovered that within certain limits, and excluding the Depression, if the economy was going up or down it had no influence on us at all. If construction figures published by the government from month to month, or year by year, went up or down it didn't influence us in the least. Or if it did, I wasn't aware of it; I never could follow any parallel at all on that.

Division of Responsibilities between Father and Son

Teiser: What about the division of the responsibilities between your father and yourself?

Herrick: Early in my career I did things relating to engineering, but I gradually got more and more involved in management and very quickly regretted not studying management. When we were in college, there was no business school, there was no career in management. It was considered that everybody could manage, or nobody could [laughs]. For example, the nearest thing to a business school at UC was the Department of Commerce. We engineers thought that was a big joke, and they in turn thought we were a big joke. That was a little rivalry. I think the business school at Stanford was started in '38 or '39; and only recently has the business school at UC Berkeley become a very important school. It was an offshoot of the Department of Commerce.

Teiser: Your father must have trusted you considerably.

Herrick: No [laughs]--no and yes. He trusted me as much as he had to. I had a brother who was very unhappy working for the company and did other work; he left the company and returned to it from time to time. He died in 1952. He never contributed to the company, really; he just had to work for it to get income, that's all.

Gradually, as the company grew, I gained the responsibility. But I remember that up to the day my father died in 1947, he had two desks. One was in the very nice little office that we built for him, with fine wood panelling. He also planted his other desk right in front of the entrance, and when the mail came he grabbed the mail.

Herrick: It came early in those days, close to 8 a.m. He looked at the mail first, so his degree of trust wasn't total. On another occasion I was sitting in my office, which was removed somewhat from his and removed from the main office--that is, the main room--and I heard hammering and sawing. I started looking around, and discovered that my father had ordered the janitor's room to be turned into the women's toilet without even asking me [laughs].

Jacobson: Did you have many women employees at that time?

Herrick: No. At that time we probably only had two, maybe three. I mentioned Etta Herman. She was with the company for many, many decades. Then there was a woman who was the bookkeeper, and I guess there was a stenographer. They were always paid very low salaries, except that Mrs. Herman became a very important figure. She became a skilled purchasing agent.

Father's Management Style

Teiser: Was it bothersome to you not to be more involved?

Herrick: Very. Very bothersome. This is an interesting point, I think: after he died, of course, I was the one person responsible for cleaning out his desk at the company, and I found that he had made a written offer to sell the company. He'd never discussed it with me at all. Amazing.

Jacobson: On what kinds of occasions would he discuss things with you?

Herrick: Well, the same way I discussed things with Mr. [Harold L.] Dornsife when he was my manager and I was the president. The two top men, and sometimes six or eight top people, meet in any organization, particularly a corporation, and talk about any important decisions or plans that they are making. His failure to do that resulted in the company being an image of him personally, and did not have the influence of a younger person--not only a younger person, but a civil engineer. That refers to the condition I mentioned, in which he was ideal for founding the company and running it as a one-man company, but that handicapped further development of the company.

Herrick: That has occurred over and over and over again in small companies. Even today, when I make investments I'm very concerned about what appears to be a one-man operation, or even an operation where it's run by a family.

Jacobson: You mentioned that he was a quick decision-maker.

Herrick: I think he was a quick decision-maker. He was under constant stress; he worked very hard. He was not one to take a coffee break or go on a vacation. He got to the office before eight o'clock every morning, had a very brief lunch, and worked till five-thirty or six o'clock every night. Very hard-working.

Teiser: Did he have any recreation?

Herrick: He had two important things in his life. One was handball. I'm a member of the Olympic Club, and he was a member in about 1895 and enjoyed his handball. He was also a very able and active chess player. I don't know much about the classifications of chess players, but I believe they're classified as A, B, and C, or unclassified. He was a B player, or something like that; he was a very skilled chess player. That, I think, helps to recognize his character.

Teiser: Where did he play chess?

Herrick: At the Mechanics Institute. He decided one day that I was to learn how to play chess. He told me the moves, which I remember very well, and then he said, "Let's play a game." He made no effort to lose the game or handicap himself at all, so he beat me. After a couple like that I said, "I don't want to play chess anymore."

He was a bridge player also, and my bridge playing (which I still pursue and enjoy tremendously) is the result of a terrible argument between my father and mother. They played bridge one evening, and I don't know what happened, but they argued to the extent that my mother said, "I will never play bridge with you again." So he looked around, and there I was, age fourteen, and he taught me how to play, and I played with him after that [laughs].

Teiser: Dominoes is your game, is it not?

Herrick: Dominoes is a game that I play much more frequently than bridge merely because of opportunities. I played bridge on Monday, and dominoes on Tuesday and Wednesday (yesterday). Dominoes is a good lunch game because the deal changes very often--that's called the drawing--and also you can eat while you're playing dominoes, and getting the tiles dirty doesn't matter; whereas getting mayonnaise on playing cards is a problem.

Jacobson: Your father was very demanding of himself; was he equally demanding of you?

Herrick: Very. Absolutely. He was very demanding of himself and very demanding of me. On top of it, he never indicated any appreciation at all, never. I mean, not one instance.

Teiser: Do you think he felt it?

Herrick: I think he did, because when I took the naval cruise after my freshman year, the young officers on board became very good friends; I lived in the junior officers' quarters. They said, "Why don't you go to Annapolis?" I was enjoying my naval career, such as it was, and I thought, "Why don't I go to Annapolis?"

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Herrick: I told him in a letter about the possibility of going to Annapolis and becoming a naval officer. He wrote back the only letter he ever wrote me (and I still have it in the safe deposit box), in which he said he never would have started the company in 1921 had he not thought I would have followed in his footsteps. And he discouraged me from joining the navy, becoming an Annapolis student. Many a time I regretted that I had not become a naval officer. I think I would have enjoyed it, even in spite of the war.

Jacobson: Was he a demanding employer to work for from the perspective of other employees?

Herrick: To the extent that he could afford to be, yes. The father-son relationship is different than the boss-employee relationship. I think he exercised all the demand that he could afford.

Teiser: Were you well-paid as a young employee?

Herrick: I think I mentioned somewhere that in 1932, when I left the apprentice ironworker work and entered the office, he employed me in the office very reluctantly because, of course, it was the depth of the Depression as far as the company was concerned. He said that the only compensation he could offer was fifteen dollars a week. And I think my progress in pay was very slow. I remember I always tried to time my request carefully, but I always went to him personally and said that I had got my last raise at such-and-such a date, and my pay was whatever, and I thought it was time that I was being considered for a salary increase. I remember his story over and over again. He said, "Well, if I raise your salary, I have to raise your brother, Merritt's, salary." I hesitate to record this, but he always said, "Merritt isn't due for an increase, so I can't increase your salary." [laughs] I quickly developed an argument against that. He was very sensitive to my being married and also having children. He was a great family man, and my having a child merited a raise.

Buying Steel

Teiser: Did you do any purchasing?

Herrick: No. My father bought equipment, and Mrs. Herman bought supplies. When it came to negotiating contracts for the raw project, the steel, it was always done by the chief executive officer, whoever it was--by my father, or by me later.

Teiser: Was there much discretion in purchasing steel?

Herrick: That's quite a story. The steel for a company of our size, for major contracts--and that might be fifty tons or two hundred tons or three hundred tons--came directly from the mill. It was ordered and rolled in Chicago or Homestead, Pennsylvania, or some place like that, and shipped by boat. The price was sometimes negotiable and sometimes it was the published price. When Kaiser established a mill, that was another source besides U.S. Steel and Bethlehem. On smaller contracts and on individual requirements, even in large contracts, we would go to a steel warehouse, of which there

Herrick: were several in this region and always have been. It wasn't until 1949 or '50, or something like that, that buying steel from Japan was instituted.

When I owned and managed the company, I bought very little, if any, outside of the United States. But as soon as the Dornsifes bought the company they bought more and more, to the extent that apparently they had three-quarters of their supply from Japan. It wasn't a matter of argument between us; it was a difference in policy. In fact, I don't think Mr. Dornsife ever came to me and said, "Why are you ordering from domestic mills; why aren't you ordering from Japan?" But between my ownership and management and theirs was that contrast.

Teiser: It seems to me that we sent enough scrap metal to Japan in the 'thirties to bring it all back now.

Herrick: Yes.

Teiser: That must have had an effect on the industry.

Herrick: The source and cost of scrap is very important. Over the world steel production, I don't know which is most important, but I think scrap is more important than iron ore, by far.

Teiser: Could you make use of scrap?

Herrick: No. We created scrap and sold it.

Teiser: How can scrap be used, and what are the limits?

Herrick: You have to melt it down. I should know this, but there probably had to be some weeding out. Our product was mild steel; that's a technical term indicating the chemical content of the steel. So our scrap was mild steel, and that was dumped into a furnace to melt. If we mixed in other products, there may have been some weeding out. Cast iron, for example, pure iron, I think they could tolerate that; but I suppose brass or other metals, tin, probably, would be foreign substances.

Teiser: It seems to me I remember that scrap metal dealers in the 'thirties became suddenly steel dealers, and that they upgraded themselves in this country.

Herrick: It became a very prosperous business. During the war, scrap was very scarce, and scrap dealers went out into the Valley, for example, and went to all the small towns and practically took a rake and tried to find broken-up automobiles or anything they could get. Scrap iron was very rare, and the price went very high. In one case I know of a scrap company that went into steel mill rolling, but I don't know about any others. There were those in the East that were originally scrap dealers who went into rolling steel.

Government-Financed Projects

Teiser: Was the company involved in the Depression in any of the public projects? Did you supply steel for any of them?

Herrick: Yes. I wasn't an ironworker apprentice, but it was shortly after that time when we were working on what was called the Health Department of the City. It's on Polk Street and Fell, over there somewhere. I was working on that project and we supplied the steel for that; that was a major contract for us. I think I was directing the steel erection department at that time. I was friendly with the business agent, and he said, "How would you like to see the Opera House?" It was under construction. I agreed, and I enjoyed going in the steel frame, and seeing, for example, that the chandelier is a structural steel frame, a big steel frame. People pay too much attention to "The Phantom of the Opera," if you'll notice, where the phantom severs the connection of the chandelier in the opera house so that it crashes on the floor and kills people. That's part of the opera; it's opening in New York now. I always think of the contrast, because with the steel frame in our opera house it's unconceivable that there would be such an accident.

Teiser: I've looked up there and wondered sometimes.

Herrick: People ask what would happen if there were an earthquake? Well, what would happen is that it depended on the whole steel frame.

Teiser: Were there any of the federal government-financed make-work projects that you were involved in?

Herrick: As a policy we avoided government work, but we couldn't afford that generally; we did have to take contracts. I don't remember them relating to WPA at all, but they must have.

Teiser: Why did you avoid government work?

Herrick: Because of the influence of government on the work. The inspections, the delays--delays in decisions and things of that sort; there were many reasons to avoid it. Even today in investing, I consider very carefully the influence of the government on the corporation operation. When railroads existed, I refused ever to invest in railroads because of the undue government regulation. And even now I'm considering biotech investment, and I think that's too risky.

You see, people in the government frequently are inept people who can't get a job anywhere else. In any case, they don't know anything about steel construction, they don't know anything about biotech work; so they regulate both of them, in each case, and the regulations are unreasonable. You see that in all kinds of things today: in regulations of the nuclear power plants, for instance. OSHA is another good example. You see, they went into safety; they said we had to have safety regulated by the federal government, so they established OSHA. And now they've abandoned it. There's a state OSHA again after it was abandoned.

Jacobson: Were there many projects that you were turning down as a result of the policy not to accept government work?

Herrick: Probably. More typical was highway construction, in which steel beams were commonly used before they put in pre-stressed concrete; steel girders were still used after that, but less frequently. Generally the girders in highway construction were too big for us; they required too big a crane or more space than we had to devote. So we had to avoid those for a different reason.

Teiser: Did you do bridges?

Herrick: Bridge-building is a very different branch of the industry. We did a little bit of bridge-building. Some of them were very simple, just beams. We did do a few, but as a general rule, a steel fabricating plant that does buildings doesn't do bridges. Today if a major bridge is built, U.S. Steel will be the principal bidder, if not the sole bidder.

Teiser: You didn't get involved in all that dam work, like Kaiser and Five Companies and so forth?

Herrick: We did have a few small contracts, but not on the early dam work. There are little steel structures in dam work that we did get involved in. I thought you were going to refer to the bridges, and on the Golden Gate Bridge the only contract we had was the carriages on the bottom of the bridge deck, which are still there; they run on a rail, and they're used for painting and so forth underneath. We did those. I think those were devised after that dreadful accident in which the safety net collapsed and several men were killed. On the Bay Bridge I don't think we had any contract. But because of my friendship with the steel union, I was invited to walk up a cable, up to the top of the tower, and I enjoyed that tremendously.

Teiser: Did you do any work on the Carquinez bridge?

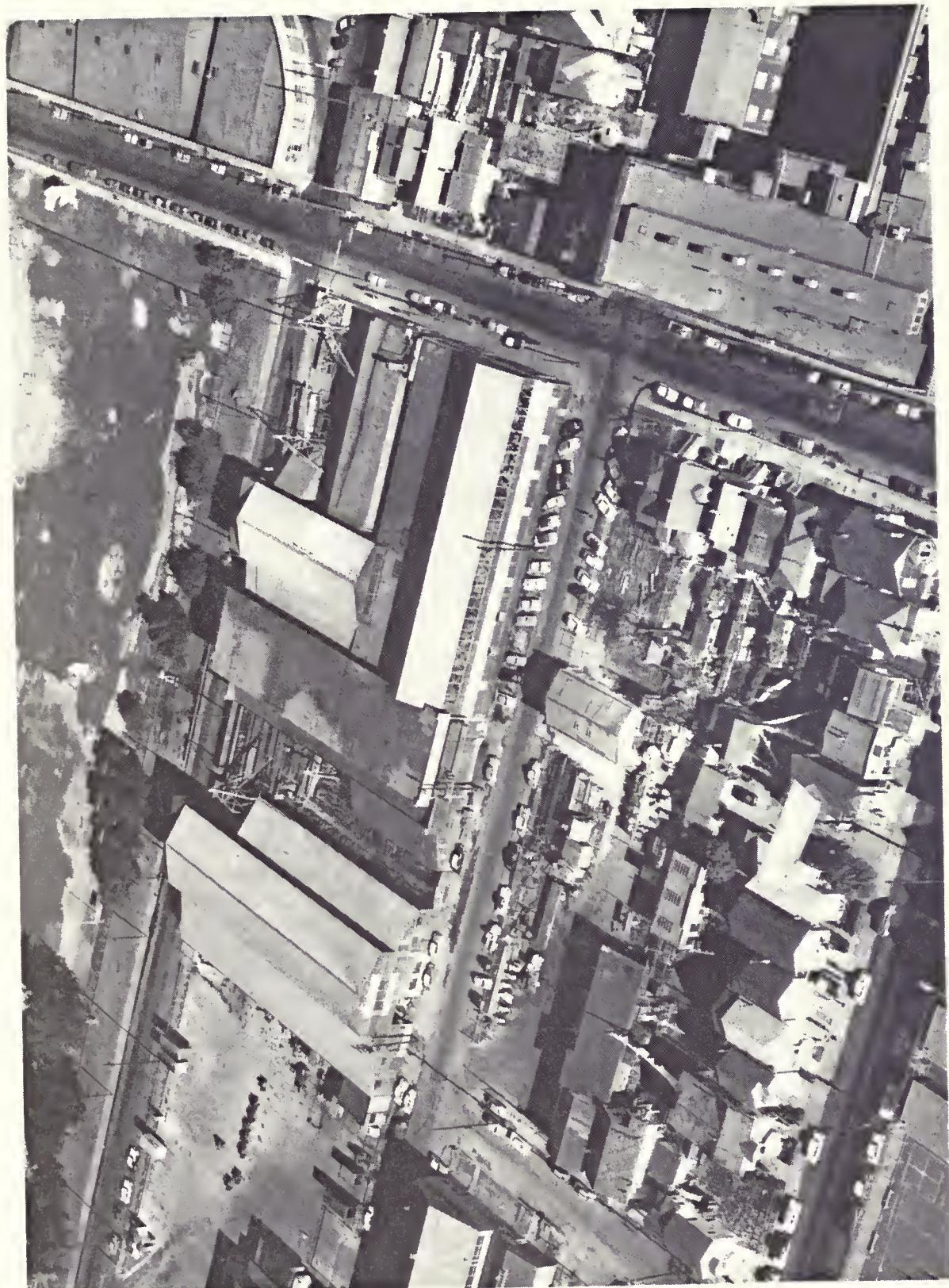
Herrick: No. The original Carquinez bridge was being built while I was in college, and it was designed by Charles Derleth. He took the whole class out to see the mid-span being raised off a barge. The towers and the structure were completed, and the middle span was raised up by itself and attached to the two towers. That was the original one, which was a riveted structure. That's an interesting contrast, because the other one, the twin bridge, is all welded.

Teiser: That's another development.

Herrick: Yes. Oh, that's a tremendous change in business. There are three ways to attach steel. One is obviously welding; another is what's called the use of an impact wrench, which is used on a bolt, which is tightened to a set tensile strength; and ordinary bolts also and, of course riveting. But today the sound you hear in construction is the impact wrench, which tightens the nut up to a certain tensile force.

Teiser: How does welding come into it today?

Herrick: Welding is used wherever they can't use bolts. They prefer to use bolts now, because that's a cold process, you see-- bring up the two pieces, match the holes, and put the bolts in. But there are a great many places where welding is important. In the shop, welding is the principal method of attachment. In the field it's essential in many, many positions for strength.



Aerial view of Herrick Iron Works' Oakland plant.

IV LABOR NEGOTIATIONS

Teiser: You mentioned your friendship with the steel union.

Herrick: Yes. Because of my earlier being a member of the union, and my early participation in labor negotiations.

Teiser: How did you get started in labor negotiations?

Herrick: Oh, just by volunteering to join the employer's committee. I made ironworker friends on the job, you see, so that relationship continued into the time when I represented management.

Whitcomb Hotel Meeting (1932)

Herrick: We had a meeting at the Whitcomb Hotel, in which the ironworkers went with the employers; this was the erection group, the field ironworkers. It was at that meeting, which was probably in 1932, that the ironworkers asked that their wages be reduced, because they thought that would increase employment. I don't think they were fighting non-union operations, because there were no non-union operations, or virtually none. They just had the fantastic idea that if ironworkers were paid twenty-five cents an hour less, there would be more work to do, which was not true at all.* But still, I'll never forget that meeting, considering the many, many meetings after that in which they asked for increases, greater and greater.

*See also p. 25.

Representing the Interests of Structural Steel Fabricators

Teiser: As a labor negotiator, what do you feel your position was? Were you the main negotiator for your company?

Herrick: I was the main negotiator for the entire industry in Northern California during some periods. I was involved in negotiating three different contracts. One was the field ironworkers; another was the shopworkers, which was the same international but I think a different local, an entirely different operation, anyway; and also the operating engineers. The operating engineers was a statewide contract, and I worked with the Bechtel people on negotiating. The ironworkers and the shopworkers was Northern California. It was first a local for the Bay Area, then gradually spread to all of Northern California.

Of course, labor costs are an extremely important part of the cost of fabricated steel, and we were subject to the competition of other materials. The best example is the one in which a steel girder, or a pre-stressed concrete beam could be used; concrete was the principal competitor. There were also uses of glued wood timbers that were competitive. So we were in a highly competitive business. Furthermore, U.S. Steel, Columbia Steel, Bethlehem Steel, and ultimately Kaiser, were employing steelworkers, which was a different international and a different wage rate. So we were competitive there too.

It was very important that someone pursue the labor negotiation in our field, to maintain our competitive position as much as possible. Labor negotiation was unattractive to a great many people. With small plants-- and the fabricators were all small, in a sense, compared to the present size--the manager was too busy to pay any attention to labor negotiations. He would avoid it if somebody else would do it. So I did it.

I had observed that in one trade, which I will not mention, the management neglected negotiations. Consequently today we pay a tremendous price for that particular service because of the neglect of negotiations, in which the union had complete freedom virtually to demand whatever pay they wanted. A big influence in all these negotiations was the general contractor. They have their own organization, of course, and they negotiated other fields. They wanted to

Herrick: do the steel negotiations, but we were too well-established in doing the negotiating. But the general contractors negotiate many other contracts.

Teiser: Like what?

Herrick: Oh, building labor, hod carriers, sheet metal workers. The result of their negotiations had a great influence on our negotiations.

Teiser: Various things seem to indicate that you were a very patient young man.

Herrick: You better ask my wife! Of course, I had the model of my father, who was highly self-disciplined. Studying civil engineering you do learn facts about design, but you also learn great self-discipline. I think in any heavy subject at the university, self-discipline is very important. If you have to study, you study, no matter what the opportunity to play is. I think I developed what patience I had through that.

Negotiating Strategies

Teiser: Labor negotiation must have required a great deal of patience.

Herrick: Oh, it took tremendous patience. A technique in labor negotiation is literally to wear the other side down by extending the meeting time. Often we went home at one and two in the morning.

Teiser: Someone told me the technique is to never leave the room.

Herrick: Absolutely. And when the union side asks for "caucuses," as they called them, we knew they were beginning to weaken. I guess the management asked for "caucuses" also, sometimes. Leaving the room is part of the technique, of course. Sometimes you found that the union representatives didn't agree among themselves. You could feel that as you negotiated. Perhaps the strongest man, the chairman or the representative of the international, realized the management position more or less; so then we would ask to leave the room

Herrick: to allow them to get together and have the strong man persuade the others that they should go in the direction of the management offer.

Teiser: Did you get any extra pay for that?

Herrick: Oh, no.

Teiser: It must have taken a lot of extra hours.

Herrick: Oh, it did. And of course I had to have a committee. When I talked about prolonging the meetings, we had one member of the committee who was a representative of Judson Steel. He had the ability to tell fascinating stories ad infinitum, over and over again. We used him a great deal to soften up the union representatives, and also to prolong the meeting. [laughter]

Teiser: Do you think your interest in drama fed into this?

Herrick: No, not into the labor negotiations, but it's been a very important part of my life, as you know.

Teiser: The effects of the National Labor Relations Act--I put that into the outline not knowing anything specific about it.

Herrick: And when you put it in I thought about what influence it had. No doubt it had an influence, but by the time it was established, our relations with the union were all set. There was no matter of organizing. Their principal power is to allow a group of employees to organize, and we were already organized. On one occasion we came to serious disagreement and an arbitrator was introduced; I think he was a state employee. He became a supreme court judge in the state, and he was a very able man. I remember him, and I can almost name him, but not quite. But that worked out all right. He met with us, and he brought peace.

Competition from Non-Union and Overseas Operations

Teiser: San Francisco is a very strong labor city, as is the whole Bay Area. Did you have competition from outside?

Herrick: Yes. Small steel contracts are not practical to do very far out of the area. There were non-union operations elsewhere, and there were operations elsewhere that paid lower wages than we paid. They also paid less for the steel, and on larger contracts contractors out of the area would come in and raid this area, and take contracts here. Now, of course, believe it or not, the Korean steel fabricators are a serious threat in this area. Imagine that.

Teiser: Such heavy material--

Herrick: Heavy, and also they roll the steel in Korea, and they fabricate it with, as far as I can see, the equivalent of slaves. I mean, if you work in the Korean steel fabricators, you're assigned that job by the government, and the government controls what your pay is.

Teiser: In general, is there government control of the steel industry here, a heavy-handedness?

Herrick: I think as a general answer I'd have to say no.

Labor Negotiation Committee

[Interview 3: January 28, 1988]##

Jacobson: Last time I think we left off talking about your role as a labor negotiator. You brought up a couple of things that I wanted to ask you about. One was the management committee that was set up to negotiate with the unions. Who was on it, and how were they selected?

Herrick: It was simply called a labor negotiation committee. We attempted to get a representative from every company to whom the agreement might apply. There were individuals that we made a special attempt to get on the committee, and otherwise anyone was welcome who was sent by the competitors.

Jacobson: Which companies would send--?

Herrick: All the small fabricating companies, and I'm now talking about the shop labor agreement. The small fabricating companies, of which we were one, were covered by a single agreement for the Bay Area. The agreement for the Bay Area

Herrick: gradually expanded to cover fabricating plants in the Valley--Stockton and elsewhere--so we ended up negotiating a contract for, really, Northern California steel fabricating shops. Incidentally, we were the first to have a strike by those people. To a labor negotiator, reaching a strike position is a sign of success!

Jacobson: Would the committee meet ahead of time to devise a strategy?

Herrick: Yes, but rarely. It was very much catch-as-catch-can.

Jacobson: What were the actual bargaining sessions like, once you got together with the union?

Herrick: We met at eight o'clock in the evening or earlier, and negotiated sometimes up to one or two o'clock in the morning, which was a matter of wearing the other side out, or vice versa; I don't know who was making it last, but we knew that it might be favorable to do that.

Union Demands and Concerns

Jacobson: Was there considerable animosity, or was the tone more conciliatory?

Herrick: The tone was more conciliatory. There were seldom any loud arguments. There were frequent stubborn stands which they took. It was always necessary to realize that the local with whom we were negotiating was a branch of the international. If we got into a serious deadlock we would often call the international representative, who was stationed on the coast, sometimes in San Francisco and sometimes in Los Angeles. We knew him well because he was also involved in negotiations with field ironworkers, the erection crew. There again we negotiated that separately, of course. Then we realized it was for the whole Northern California area and also influenced the Southern California area.

Jacobson: I imagine the field workers' concerns would have been quite different from the shop.

Herrick: Oh, entirely. The skill is heavy work and very dangerous in the field, and somewhat dangerous in the shop. But because it's intermittent in the field, the labor rate is much higher in the field than it is in the shop.

Jacobson: What typically would be the kinds of demands that each group made?

Herrick: In the very simplest form it was really a matter of wages, in which they would say they had travelled long enough at the former wages and they wanted twenty-five cents more an hour.

As I mentioned, our competition was very severe. There were three types of competition. One was with the larger steel fabricators who were organized by the steelworkers, an entirely different union with different rates and different regulations and fringe issues; another was non-union workers, fabricators out of this area; and the third was other materials than structural steel, such as pre-stressed concrete--and concrete in general, whether it was pre-stressed or not. A builder of a building like this--in this case the building is wood with brick walls--typically at that time had the choice, in a six-story building (and it would be true of a twelve-story building or higher), of designing it either in concrete or in steel. We tried to influence them to design it in steel to keep the costs down, which resulted in a better competitive position.

Jacobson: You mentioned that one time a strike was actually threatened; was it rare to get to that point?

Herrick: Yes, very rare. As I recall that occurred in the late thirties, '38 or '39. From the time that I mentioned in 1932, when I met with the negotiating committee with the field ironworkers, until about 1937, the shop ironworkers were not organized at all; they were not members of a union. Then the international moved in and organized it. Of course there was no government regulation, as with the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board], which didn't exist at that time. So I guess the strike occurred early in the organizing period.

Jacobson: Were there people on the union side that you dealt with regularly each time it came up?

Herrick: That's a good question. I always appreciated it if some of our own men were on the committee, and that often occurred. Yes, there were union members who were active enough and interested enough to participate in the negotiations. The business agent sometimes was the leader, and sometimes the president of the union was the leader. Seldom would the president and the business agent be the same person. It was always up to us to find out who had the greatest influence and who had the final say as to an agreement. [brief interruption; tape off]

Because of my involvement in labor negotiation, people often discussed it with me. They all wanted to know what I thought about unions. It was a popular idea in the late thirties and forties that we had to get rid of the unions, that it was a nuisance, and they were destructive. My attitude always was that they are there, and you had better deal with them and deal with them fairly and positively and sympathetically.

Often the question put to me was, "What is wrong with unions?" I had my opinion based on when this shop strike occurred. I asked members of the union, "Who attended the meeting?" Total membership of the union in our region was about six hundred, and attendance at the meeting in which they voted the strike was less than fifteen men. My answer to people who asked what I thought was wrong with unions was that the members did not participate. The incompetents who didn't have regular work sought business agents' jobs and were allowed to run the union without any direction.

Teiser: Could you generalize--?

Herrick: I think it's still true. But, of course, I haven't negotiated any contracts since 1960. In 1960 I was in the midst of negotiating a field contract when they asked for improved health benefits. At that time I quit, because to me it's one thing to talk about dollars and cents--an increase of ten cents or fifty cents an hour--but to talk about increased health benefits with the possibility of the number of days in the hospital, and whether to cover childbirth, or whether to cover psychiatry, and so forth, was beyond me and I wouldn't negotiate it. I said, "If you want to negotiate it, we'll talk about five cents more for

Herrick: the health plan; but I won't talk about what the privileges are, what the coverage is." I think I was out of it from then on, but I remember that it was a matter that came up at that time.

Teiser: Had other benefits come up earlier?

Herrick: Yes, holidays and things of that sort had come up--sickness leave. Of course, those two things are not reasonable in the field, because typically a field man might work half the time and get double the hourly pay; that's a fairly typical story. So why take a vacation, and why get paid when you can't come to work?

Jacobson: Given how dangerous the field work was, were there any concerns raised about safety in negotiating contracts?

Herrick: No. No, there were not. That's an interesting question. Of course, we today are very much aware of the interest of the government in safety, and I'm sure the question of safety arises now in negotiations, but I don't know that.

Jacobson: I would imagine that knowing the people in the unions contributed to the conciliatory tone of the bargaining sessions. Was that true?

Herrick: Yes, I suppose so. What you're saying is that the committee was influenced in the negotiations, rather than just the business agent?

Jacobson: Or just having dealt with them beforehand and knowing each other's style.

Herrick: Oh, yes, that's true. As I suggested earlier, we often had a very similar negotiating committee on the part of the union, and we knew their interests and their habits. Yes, that's true.

Steelworkers vs. Ironworkers

Jacobson: Were the deals that your negotiating committee worked out any different from the deals for steelworkers who worked for the bigger companies like U.S. Steel or Bethlehem?

Herrick: Yes. The steelworkers' agreement was totally different from the ironworkers' agreement. Those are two terms that one has to become accustomed to. You ask, "Weren't you involved in steel?" Well, we were, but they were not called steelworkers; our men were called ironworkers. Steelworkers had a totally different agreement, and I never read their agreement. Their wage rates were typically lower than ours. However, they had a very belligerent union. If you were older you would recall the very serious strikes and violence and the demands of the steelworkers' union, which was one of the important unions in the country in the middle part of this century; and I suppose they still are influential.

The ironworkers, to leading union people, were just a construction union and looked down on, more or less. Construction was not primary. The primary unions were steelworkers and auto workers. The negotiations of the steelworkers and the auto workers influenced our negotiations somewhat, but we were also influenced by the rates paid plumbers and sheet metal workers, which are construction workers, you see. If the Associated General Contractors, which did a good deal of negotiation, agreed to big increases for sheet metal workers or plumbers, that would influence our negotiations with the ironworkers--the outside field workers--because they would come in and say that the plumbers got a dollar an hour more and they have steadier work because it's under a roof, not influenced by the weather, and their work is not as dangerous as ours, which is perfectly true; both statements were true.

So we were always influenced by the negotiations that the general contractors carried on, which were not always sound. Sometimes they did a very good job. They were a large association, well financed, but of course they didn't necessarily have a good labor negotiator. And often the contractors themselves were not involved, whereas I always advocated that the employers be involved directly and not employ a lawyer or a negotiation expert to negotiate the contract.

Jacobson: On the flip side, did the steelworkers' union ever look to settlements that the ironworkers worked out?

Herrick: I doubt it. They may have, but I never heard about that occurring. I think at that time there was only one plant in the Bay Area that employed steelworkers. That was the Bethlehem Steel plant in South San Francisco.

Teiser: Was the San Francisco area a bellwether for the nation?

Herrick: I don't know whether it was for the nation. It had the reputation, which I understand it has lost now, fortunately, of being extremely organized, where the unions were very strong in the area. And some fields--and by that I mean crafts or skills--were organized here that were not organized in other parts of the country. Furthermore, during the time that I was involved it was unthinkable to have construction that was done by non-union workers. Even painters. Today the non-union painters are very busy; there is a great deal of work by non-union painters. And many complete construction jobs today are totally non-union, and known to be non-union. A man can walk on the job, talk to the superintendent, and get a job sometimes as a laborer; and sometimes, if he has the skills, as a carpenter, and so forth.

Hiring Policies

Teiser: When you hired, how did you hire?

Herrick: That's a good question. The unions always wanted us to go to the union and tell them we wanted one or ten men and when. We avoided that during my career completely, I think, except when we couldn't find the men we wanted. But naturally, having been in business a long time we had a list of the skilled ironworkers, both shop and field, and we called them when we needed men.

Teiser: The union didn't object?

Herrick: Oh, yes, they objected, but not effectively. I mean, I don't think they penalized us as a result of that at that time. Of course, there again, they had the model of the longshoremen, with the "lineup"; but we didn't have anything like a "lineup." The local office was a social club; they played poker all day and went to the club and were present, hopefully, when a request was made. In other words, perhaps a contractor out of this area would go to the union and say, "We want ten men, we're going to start steel erecting." Then the men who were in the union's hall, as it was called, would be called on because they would be there, whether playing poker or what.

Operating Engineers' Union

Herrick: The union that we haven't talked about, that was a contract that I also negotiated, was the operating engineers, which are the same international and sometimes the same local as the stationary engineers. The stationary engineers are the men who tend the air conditioning and heating in a building. The operating engineers are the men on the outside that run the hoists. When I was first in the business, the hoist was steam-driven, and we had donkey engines. Our company had, I think, four donkey engines. We had to buy coal, and these men fed the fire in the boiler and operated the hoisting.

It gradually turned into regular reciprocating engines, gas-driven, so all they did was press a button that started the motor, and then they pulled levers to hoist or let down a load. But of course they gradually got more and more wages. Certainly it took a great deal of skill to heat up a boiler and get the right amount of steam pressure, but not too much. And to start the hoisting they appeared on the job, as I recall, a half hour or an hour earlier to allow time to get up the steam. But it became a very different occupation. That union was totally influenced by the representative of the international, a man named Swanson, who was politically ambitious.

I recall the system very well: the time would come to negotiate with the operating engineers, and they would always follow the ironworkers; at least we always tried to have it so they would follow them, because we didn't want the operating engineer to get more per hour than the ironworker. The practice was to have identical wages for each of them. We would meet with the operating engineers in a negotiating committee, week after week (that is, one day a week) for three or four weeks. The conclusion of the contract would be approaching rapidly, usually June 30, and then Swanson would come in, suddenly. He would not have appeared at the negotiating meetings up to this time.

He would come in and suddenly take over the union's side, and rub his hands. I remember he would say, "Well, boys, what can we do now? Surely we're not going to have a strike, are we? What do the employers want; what does the union want?" And then he'd say, "If you'll excuse me, we'd like to have a caucus." So we excused him, of course, because we

Herrick: knew what would happen. We'd go back in, and he'd say, "Well, this time we'll agree with what you want, but watch out next time." Something like that [laughs], and he would have settled the agreement right then and there. A man with that power, of course, has tremendous power over the men.

Jacobson: Did the operating engineers' arguments for wage increases change as technology displaced them or replaced some of their functions?

Herrick: I would have to guess. Certainly, during my time of negotiating those contracts there was no change that I was aware of. The change from steam hoisting to gasoline powered hoists--and electric powered hoists, too; we used both systems--was gradual. It was not the practice in unions to recognize that the job is simpler and that consequently the wage should be less.

Originally the negotiations for the operating engineers were for a local group, a Northern California group, but finally it became for the whole western states. At one time, for example, we met in Salt Lake City, I remember. Bechtel's labor negotiator was involved, and he was a great help. I still represented the employers, but to have a Bechtel man there was a great benefit. And that was the case, you see, of an employer instead of a lawyer.

Teiser: As I remember, the longshoremen negotiated contracts based on some kind of social justice, I suppose, when mechanization took over. In going from coal to gasoline, did this kind of general justice come in?

Herrick: No. Of course, with my interest in labor negotiations, I read the newspaper articles about all the negotiations. This morning I read all about the symphony negotiations, and also about the Marin bus drivers, which are both on strike at present. You referred to one famous case where the longshoremen's work was mechanized. They attempted to block the mechanization. The employers came in saying that you don't have to carry carton by carton or box by box; it's all in containers. I've forgotten, but the longshoremen did everything they could to keep the costs of loading the same as it had been, or greater.

Teiser: And I think managed to do so, didn't they?

Herrick: I think that was the case, yes. I've forgotten the name of the negotiator; he was famous. I had met him and talked to him.

Teiser: Did that same principle apply when they went from coal to gas?

Herrick: I don't remember it having been discussed at all.

V HERRICK IRON WORKS: THE LATE THIRTIES, FORTIES,
AND FIFTIES

Hangar Doors and Other Complex Work##

Jacobson: Let's talk about some of the bigger contracts Herrick Iron Works worked on: the hangar doors?

Herrick: Hangar doors, and I've mentioned the Ford Assembly plant; that was the first major contract. Then I don't think we had any very large contracts for several years. The large contracts were generally performed by American Bridge, which is U.S. Steel and Bethlehem Steel.

Hangar doors came under the heading of complex work, which did not attract the big corporations. They probably had no inkling that there would be such a demand for hangar doors. We probably didn't realize it, either. The demand, of course, was the result of the Second World War, and also the progress in aviation calling for larger and larger planes, where the hangars were not suitable for the planes and they had to build new hangars to accommodate the larger equipment. The door is a simple rectangular form, but the thing is that it has to be quite precise. It has to be made so it will roll without catching; it can't be warped and it has to be the right dimension. So it required skill, and recognition of the requirement of standards, and the big corporations avoided it.

We had wheels, for example, that had to be bought and installed. Sometimes we had motor-driven wheels. So it was a special contract. I don't remember the magnitude of the contract, but it would be in dollars instead of in tons. In structural fabrication it was always in tons.

Herrick: I recall the Ferry Building in San Francisco was altered very substantially on the inside (they didn't disturb the outside). I don't remember when this occurred, but that was a job we immediately spotted as not being attractive to the larger corporations. We pursued it and won it. It was initially four or five hundred tons, probably \$200,000 at that time, and very complex.

Teiser: Did they gut the building?

Herrick: Practically, yes. What you see now is the World Trade Center; I think they call it the World Trade Club. It's entirely new. And that ramp that goes up to it was all new construction.

Jacobson: In the history of the company that you have written, you mentioned that in accepting the Ford Motor Company contract and the hangar doors contract, your father was very eager to take on those contracts, but you had some reservations.

Herrick: I was not involved in the Ford Assembly Plant negotiations; that took place before I had any serious contact with the company at all. In the case of the hangar doors, I simply thought that the degree of accuracy required was beyond the skills of our shop men. And so I was against it. But fortunately we did do it.

We were always searching for new products. In one case we discovered that there was a process for winding concrete tanks. Instead of having a steel tank, they poured concrete tanks with relatively thin walls and then wound it with high tensile wire. They had a machine that circled the tank. We had the right to do that in this region. That was an outlet for more business.

Another effort we made was to sell a giant-sized corrugated iron. Normal corrugated iron is probably thirty inches wide and has perhaps twelve corrugations in it; you're all familiar with that. Each piece [of the giant size] was about twenty-four inches wide and it was one corrugation curled up at the edge so as to fit the next one, which I thought was a wonderful idea. We got some contracts out of it. We finally built our own plant with that product; it's still there now.

Prison Construction

Herrick: We went into prison work. The prison work started because of the very serious riots at Alcatraz, in which one prisoner was able to escape from his confinement. They raised the devil on Alcatraz. I think there were deaths involved; they had guards as hostages, and so forth. We were invited to bid on repairing the damage that had been done in the riots. That was our first experience in prison work, and it did not involve prison locks, which is a refinement of the whole prison field. I remember visiting the site, and the viciousness of the inmates; whether they were trying to scare me or what, I don't know, but I had to walk by windows and so forth that were open, and the men were very vociferous and vulgar, seeing a civilian out there.

At the end of the war the State of California decided that they would expand, replace, and revise the whole prison system. By very great luck we got into that. That was also something that involved steel, but very carefully made steel. And it involved prison locks, which we didn't make, so we had to find a suitable source, and we did.

We supplied the ironworks--the prison grills, the metal doors, the furniture (which was all steel), and the locking devices. They're gang-locked, you know: the man at one end can pull a lever and perhaps as many as forty cell doors are unlocked and sometimes even opened.

That was another escape from the bad competition of the big corporations.

Teiser: Which prisons did you work on?

Herrick: Soledad, and one down at San Luis Obispo. We gradually branched out; we ultimately did one in New York State and one in New Mexico. We also did county jails; we did the San Francisco City and County jail. I don't remember the name of the building, but it's the principal jail in this city now. I remember we completed it, and within a week (I think the next day) the newspapers wrote a story about a prisoner escaping [laughs].

Teiser: Is this the one on top of the Hall of Justice?

Herrick: Yes. That's it.

Teiser: Did you work on any other part of the Hall of Justice?

Herrick: No. Fortunately the escape was not the result of bad design or bad workmanship. The prisoner who escaped was a contortionist and he was able to get through tiny openings by folding himself up.

Site Inspections

Teiser: Did you personally, then, go out and inspect sites?

Herrick: Yes. I believed very much in the contact of top management with the manufacturing product. I visited the shop often, and I visited field jobs quite often. I think I gained a great deal by doing that. I think foremen and men perform better if they know that the boss is likely to come around some time or other, and that he knows something about it, too. I was so serious about contact with the production that I always arranged for the board of directors to visit the shop so as to see what they controlled. I took the board of directors very seriously, and I'm very happy to say that my successor has done so also.

Board of Directors

Teiser: Was there a board of directors in your father's time?

Herrick: No, I should say not. The state requires a board of directors. Typically a lawyer, the principal owner, and the principal owner's wife will be the directors, and typically the lawyer will phone the principal owner and say that a year has come around and we have to file the minutes of the annual meeting [laughs]. So he would write it up and the meeting would never occur. That happened a great deal; I'm sure it still does. But I organized a real board of directors, with some outside directors, and I always appreciated it. It was a help. The main help is that you have to stop and think where you are going and where you have been. You have to prepare a report and be able to answer questions when the directors ask the questions.



One of many prison doors and lock systems constructed by Herrick Iron works for state penitentiaries.



Teiser: What kind of people did you look for as directors?

Herrick: My earliest board consisted of my lawyer, with whom I was very friendly; my wife, because I felt that in a closely held corporation the wife of the principal owner should know something about what was going on in case she gets the job or the influence over the running herself; a very clever man that I knew, Robert Chambers, who was the founder of Magna Power Tool and who is still active in the region; and I had another outside director, but I don't remember who it was. You don't take on competitors.

Teiser: Do you take on people with an allied knowledge?

Herrick: There are many standards for that. It's a whole different subject, but in my recognition that I lacked training in business administration, I joined the Young Presidents' Organization; I was a charter member. It was from that organization that I got Chambers as a director. One of the activities of the Young Presidents was a seminar made available, one or two or three a year. I attended two seminars at Harvard and one at Chicago. Several meetings of one at Harvard were on the subject of boards of directors of small corporations. I gained a great deal from that. They were only one week long, but very intense.

Reinforcing Steel Business

Teiser: You had gone into reinforcing steel in 1938.

Herrick: Yes, and we left that business when we got involved in war work, and returned to the business in about '46. We stayed in that business until I sold the business.

Teiser: Is reinforcing steel just those reinforcing rods that one sees?

Herrick: Yes, exactly. They're all rods, and they come in sizes; I think the smallest is three-eighths of an inch in diameter, and the largest is about an inch and a quarter--or maybe it's up to two inches. Today they're bent in the field; we bent them in the shop. We had machines that bent them, and then we packaged them, sent them out, and installed them.

Teiser: Are they used with anything but concrete?

Herrick: No. I can't think of anything.

Teiser: Why did you enter it?

Herrick: It was closely related. And, again, in that case the union, which did the fabricated structural steel in the shop, claimed they had the jurisdiction over the reinforcing steel. So by taking that as a product we had no problem of dealing with a different union. There again there was the comparison of the structural steel fabrication shop rate versus the reinforcing steel shop rate, and also the field rate for structural ironworkers versus the field rate for reinforcing steel--they were called placers or installers. Always those comparisons were made, and it was possible to favor the union or the opposite. So it was related. And we dealt with the same contractors, you see.

Teiser: Why did you drop that at the time of the war?

Herrick: Because during the war there was no reinforcing steel work; there were no buildings being built, or very few. The shop rapidly became busy on things needed by the armed forces, such as hangar doors.

Teiser: How many hangar doors did you do?

Herrick: We probably did five hundred, I guess.

Teiser: All over the country?

Herrick: Yes. They came in sets. When I say five hundred, I mean five hundred separate doors. A set might be four or six or eight separate doors that nest in the end of a hangar or on the side of a hangar, and by power, or by hand sometimes, they close. They gradually realized they didn't need them at all [laughs]. That was something that amused me. In Hawaii, what do they need doors for?

Teiser: I think of the one at Ames Laboratory, a big one that works like a fan.

Herrick: Yes. And that has orange peel-designed doors. I think we bid on those, but we didn't succeed. We had some contracts at Ames, but not many. That's a very impressive structure, a dirigible shelter.

Teiser: Most of them were straight across?

Herrick: Yes, somewhat like those bookshelves, the doors closed over the rectangular opening.

Jacobson: What was the story with the Columbia Steel Company?

Herrick: Columbia Steel existed here and was bought out by U.S. Steel. That must have occurred in the twenties, I don't know when. Columbia Steel only covered the rolling steel mill operation in this area; the steel fabrication and erection contracts were taken by U.S. Steel or by a different subsidiary. There were other large steel fabricators; there was one called McClintock-Marshall.

Jacobson: Did they play a role in encouraging Herrick to get into the reinforcing steel business?

Herrick: You are very clever. They may have influenced my father to return to the reinforcing steel business, or even the initial entering into the field, but there were various cases where U.S. Steel or Columbia Steel approached competitors and encouraged them to go into a different field. There were also cases, which seem related to me, in which they said, "We have standard credit terms which we apply to all shipments of steel; but in your case we're not going to insist on your meeting those terms. We will excuse you temporarily, for a year perhaps." Which of course strengthened our weaker competitors; they didn't have to do that with us because our credit was good. But they did it with other people, and we would say, "How does Such-and-Such a steel company continue to exist?" We finally found that this was the way they continued to exist, because they were given credit privileges by the large corporations.

Teiser: Was there any price fixing going on as well?

Herrick: There certainly was some on very large projects in which the only source of very large structural steel projects was either U.S. Steel or Bethlehem, and they undoubtedly traded off jobs. They even traded off territories. I don't remember, but I think the Bay Area was considered U.S. Steel area and Los Angeles was Bethlehem area. Subsequently Kaiser entered the picture, you see, and so the big corporations resented that, I'm sure. But they probably finally invited Kaiser to indulge in this collusion also.

Herrick: We were accused of collusion, and I think we were guilty, but that was in a different part of the business: reinforcing steel for concrete.* That is a far simpler product, and I think there was collusion going on there, and the Department of Justice was very interested.

Competitors

Jacobson: Were your other competitors specializing in different kinds of--

Herrick: Yes. Steel fence, for example, was one such--San Jose Steel.

Teiser: What other companies were there that were in your range, and what were they specializing in?

Herrick: There was the Schrader Iron Works, which I think still exists; there was Hoffman Ironworks. They're both San Francisco firms. There was San Jose Ironworks; I think it may still exist. There were smaller companies, names I don't recall. The ones I mentioned were serious competitors, being about the same size that we were and able to do the same larger contracts that we wanted to do.

Teiser: Was there another range just bigger--Judson, for instance?

Herrick: Judson Pacific was a competitor. They were larger than we and had more of an ambition to do bridge contracts. We had no such ambition; we recognized bridge construction as a totally different field requiring different skills.

Teiser: Where did you stand in relation to Bechtel?

Herrick: Bechtel was a general contractor, and we sold to Bechtel. We didn't consider Bechtel a favorable contractor. There were favorable and unfavorable ones. Each of the large contractors in this area, such as Dinwiddie and Cahill, both of which still exist, favored one steel fabricator or another.

Teiser: Kaiser came in later, didn't they?

*See also p. 67.

Herrick: Yes, Kaiser came in considerably later. They established a steel mill and went into steel fabrication. As I recall they were never the disturbing competitors, to the extent that they would not go after small contracts. Bethlehem steel, for example, would bid on a fifteen-ton project, which we considered unreasonable. We knew that our costs would be smaller than theirs on a small contract. I can't think of a comparison, but a large corporation shouldn't deal with small contracts. But they did it anyway.

Teiser: Did they get them sometimes?

Herrick: Oh, often. Bethlehem got anything they wanted. They had tremendous power, and that power consisted of the ability to furnish any steel as promptly as anybody wanted it, which included their own fabricating plant, and at any cost. I'm sure that in many instances on the large steel fabricating construction they lost money, but their board of directors in Pittsburgh never learned of the loss of money because they didn't require a report indicating that at all. This seems even more reasonable now, facing the fact that Bethlehem and U.S. Steel no longer do the kind of contracts that I'm talking about. U.S. Steel will do any large bridge now. I don't know what Bethlehem Steel does anymore.

Teiser: Irrespective of profits, would Bethlehem have taken on work just to keep hold of work?

Herrick: Yes, to maintain the relationship with the contractor, for example, or to deliberately take it away from a small contractor--to punish us, to demonstrate their power.

It's another subject, but I was on the board of directors of a steel fabricators trade association called the American Institute of Steel Construction, and I met quarterly with representatives of the big mills, socially, in New York and also at various resorts. And we had annual meetings, so there was a personal contact between executives of the big mills and fabricators and the medium and small ones--mainly medium.

Teiser: Were you ever suspected of price-fixing?

Herrick: Oh, yes. Not in structural steel, but in reinforcing steel; the Department of Justice brought suit against the whole group of reinforcing steel fabricators. And it was justified. I won't answer beyond that [laughs].

Wartime Contracts

Teiser: As the war came on, did you realize gradually what effect it was going to have on your industry?

Herrick: Gradually, yes.

Teiser: Did you see it coming?

##

Teiser: I asked you if you had anticipated the war, and you mentioned Pearl Harbor. I wonder if you had any guesses before Pearl Harbor that this was coming on?

Herrick: No, because we were a Pacific Coast company. The war in Europe had very little effect except to make steel more and more scarce, and to dampen construction in this area. But as soon as the Pacific part of the war started, we were very much aware that we would be very busy. We were so busy that we had no time to think about the future.

Teiser: What did you immediately start doing?

Herrick: One of the biggest contracts we had was for landing barges, in which there was a ramp that was let down to permit personnel as well as equipment to get on and off the landing barge. We made a great many of the ramps. We also did construction, structural steel, both at Kaiser Richmond plant and at Marin Ship plant. So that kept us busy, too. You remember Marin Ship was built in the middle of the war; it didn't exist at all when the war started. And Kaiser started fabricating ships, either before the war started or very early, and expanded tremendously and required buildings.

We also supplied major parts of ships. Kaiser was very imaginative, and other shipyards would undoubtedly think that they couldn't possibly subcontract sections of a ship. But we made sections of the superstructure of perhaps ten ships. They were very large--I think they were forty-odd feet at the smallest dimension--and they had to be transported in the middle of the night by truck to the place where they were going to be installed.

Teiser: Where did you construct them?

Herrick: Right in our little plant, a very inefficient plant.

Teiser: And you took them to the Kaiser shipyards?

Herrick: Yes. We loaded them on trucks.

Teiser: Did they have blackouts for those? Did you move them always under blackout?

Herrick: Oh, yes.

Another strange contract we had at Marin Ship was in building rudders. There again, convention in shipbuilding required the rudders to be cast; they were cast bronze, I think. But the engineers at Bechtel, or Marin Ship, decided that they could be fabricated structural steel, to be built like a tank, you see, properly curved surfaces and reinforced inside. And we made those.

Teiser: Are they still made that way, or was that an emergency?

Herrick: They don't build ships anymore!

Teiser: Was that an emergency procedure; would they still prefer to cast?

Herrick: Oh, definitely. I'm sure it was an emergency solution. Whether they've stayed with it, I have no idea. Of course, the normal rudder would be a material that wouldn't rust, whereas ours was an ordinary "mild" steel, which would rust.

Teiser: They were huge, too, and had to be moved.

Herrick: Tremendous.

[Interview 4: February 4, 1988]##

Jacobson: You had no trouble finding lots of men to--

Herrick: Yes, we had lots of trouble. I think the reason we worked one full shift and two part shifts was because we couldn't find the men for the other full shifts. I caught one man who was coming in early and coming in late and doing two jobs; there may have been others.

Herrick: Still, it's reminiscent of my father's discovery when Moore Drydock ceased work on the ships during the First World War: they took down piles of plates and steel and they found a nest in the pile of steel where men would come to work in the morning and then go in there to sleep, maybe in the afternoon or on some other shift. At any rate, it was obvious that it had been made a nice little cave.

We made every effort to limit any man working over ten hours. We found that it was nonproductive, and we found that it was also dangerous because as they tired they had accidents. But we weren't entirely successful.

Assuming the Presidency

Teiser: Let's move on to your coming to the presidency of the company. That was immediately occasioned by your father's death?

Herrick: Exactly, in 1947. All I ever say about it is that I elected myself president of the corporation [laughs]. I had been the number two man after my father for over ten years, I guess, and had plenty of expertise and experience so that I could handle it. But I was faced with several serious problems, such as the fact that my brother, Merritt, who was a little younger than I, was not effective, mainly because he just did not enjoy the business. He was the assistant manager, and so one of my immediate problems was who would replace the second man, my being promoted to the first. Another very serious condition, which I realized, was that the shop, made up of five separate acquisitions and never planned properly for a flow of material, was a very extravagant shop to operate. That had to be solved, and the only solution was to move away from the area. We thought Hayward, for example, was where we would move to, and we thought that was absolutely inconceivable to move all the way to Hayward. When we did move we thought we would lose a lot of skilled men from the shop, and we discovered that they were hoping we would move in that direction. The majority of the ones that we were afraid we were going to lose had already moved into Hayward or San Leandro and even beyond.

Teiser: How did you solve the problem with your brother?

Herrick: I don't remember taking any action or making any decision to solve it. He was perfectly aware that he was not producing, and I think he was not happy working under me, so to speak. I don't remember what he did.

Teiser: Did he leave the company?

Herrick: Let's see, that was 1947; it must have been five years later that he committed suicide. He dropped out of activity in general. By then he had been divorced several times, and he lived at home alone and drank too much, and so forth.

Teiser: Who became your assistant?

Herrick: I don't remember any one person that I would have indicated as my assistant. But facing these two very great problems, we very shortly employed a business consultant. We chose Booz, Allen, and Hamilton. They made what they called a general survey, which took three or four months and cost a fair amount of money. They did an excellent job.

That leads in to the employment of Mr. Dornsife.

Westvaco Phosphorous Plant

Teiser: Let's stay in the forties for a minute. You moved to Hayward in 1952. I'm looking at events that happened in the forties: Westvaco phosphorous plant in Idaho.

Herrick: That was a rather sensational contract in several ways. A few years ago my wife, Marion, asked what experience at work do I enjoy recalling. I was so involved in the Westvaco contract that I told her that was the one that I would repeat if I were able. My father read the Wall Street Journal rather thoroughly every day, and after he died the subscription continued and I felt compelled to read it, too. I found in the midst of the market section, which is always on the next to the last page, a tiny note probably not four or five lines long, that the Westvaco company was building a plant in Pocatello, Idaho. I didn't even know where Pocatello, Idaho was. It indicated that they had already engaged United Engineers and Constructors, which was then a very large construction company in Philadelphia. We wrote and asked for

Herrick: a set of plans. We got the plans and prepared the bid. At that moment my star salesman resigned to go to a competitor. The date for bidding approached, and the bids were to be made in Philadelphia. So the person to take the bids was me [laughs], and I did so. We didn't even write the bid until we got there and found out whether any new changes had come on.

I went to the hotel stenographer (in those days all the hotels had stenographers; I don't know what they do now). I had nothing to do that evening, and I asked her what there was to do in town. She said there was a play, a tryout that was going to New York, and I might see if I could get a ticket. I asked where it was and so forth, and it turned out to be Arthur Miller's Death of a Salesman. That was the first production of the play, and I'm very proud to have seen that.

The next day I was present at the bid opening, and we were the low bidders. Over the entire history of the job we were very well treated by the United Engineers. They were apparently very happy to get a bid from someone other than U.S. Steel or Bethlehem.

The job, as you can see from looking at the map, was a thousand miles from San Francisco, and it was to be constructed in the middle of the winter at freezing temperatures. We performed, and performed profitably, and did a complete job. It was increased in size a number of times, so that it became quite an important job.

Jacobson: Did you have to develop any new techniques to work in such cold temperatures?

Teiser: No, we had to rely on the field workers, who performed, as I say, in freezing weather. I made a number of trips out there. I don't think it was possible then to fly to Pocatello; at any rate, I remember flying to Salt Lake City and renting a car and driving in the snow up to Pocatello to inspect the job. So that was a memorable job, and I think that took place before 1950.

Teiser: We have 1948-49.

Herrick: Probably, yes.

Reorganizing the Reinforcing Steel Department, Key Personnel, and Steel Shortages

Teiser: The reorganization of the reinforcing steel department in 1949. That was before you moved.

Herrick: Yes. It was a reorganization, of course. We had been in the product before. It's a far simpler process than fabricated structural steel. It's nothing but rods, you see, and mesh. Mesh is made of rods; it's like a steel fence.

Teiser: During all this time you had with you these three men, Ernest W. Richards, Arthur Balwick, and L.A. Peck?

Herrick: Balwick stayed a long time; Richards remained until some proper retirement time; Peck was the man that I mentioned who was the star salesman who resigned at this critical time when we were bidding on the Westvaco job. He returned to our company a few years later and continued until his death, or his retirement anyway. He was a relative, in a sense. His brother was the husband of my aunt in Chicago.

Teiser: What were the contributions of Richards and Balwick?

Herrick: Balwick was assistant shop superintendent; Richards was the superintendent. Both were very able. I think Balwick was with the company in the early thirties and remained with the company until proper retirement time. Both were simply hard-working, experienced men. Neither were, for example, engineers or college graduates, but they considered that their life was part of the corporation life. Peck, as you can see, was less loyal, but quite an able salesman.

Teiser: Would men in Richards' and Balwick's position today have engineering degrees?

Herrick: It depends on the size of the company. I've noticed, as you suggest, that plant superintendents are likely to be engineering graduates, but I think that's only true of larger companies--larger than ours was at that time.

Teiser: What about the Korean war?

Herrick: I don't remember anything we did during the Korean war,* but it may have influenced our activity. The Second World War, the Korean war, and the Vietnam war all had the influence of reducing activity in building, and we were interested in building, of course. We've talked about the products that we produced during the Second World War. I don't remember anything that we did during the Korean war or the Vietnam war.

Teiser: There was a steel shortage between the Second World War and the Korean war, wasn't there?

Herrick: Yes. Not for the entire period, but immediately after the Second World War there was a tremendous steel shortage. That was another difficulty in doing the Pocatello, Idaho job--getting enough steel to do the work.

Teiser: What caused the shortage?

Herrick: The fact that building was shut down during the Second World War, so all the buildings that had been planned as early as 1939, say, suddenly became awake and were underway, financed and scheduled. That was one reason; that's enough reason, I think, and that was the way it was.

Teiser: Too much demand for capacity.

Herrick: Yes, too much demand.

Jacobson: Was the reinforcing steel department affected by those shortages?

Herrick: No. Reinforcing steel in very large quantities may have been hard to come by, but a mill that produces reinforcing steel is far simpler than a mill that produces structural shapes, as you can imagine. The typical structural shape is an "H" shape, and also there are angles and other shapes. As I say, reinforcing steel is always rods, which is just a line. There was a mill in Emeryville, Judson Steel Company, which produced reinforcing steel. We bought some that was produced in Pittsburg, California, and possibly some that was produced in South City.

*But see p. 75.

Jacobson: How important a move was it for the company to revitalize the reinforcing steel department?

Herrick: It was important because we realized that our abilities and ambitions and finances were such that we could produce more and increase our annual revenue. But we realized that we were very much handicapped by the steel mills, our suppliers being competitors. This was a tremendous handicap until the mills abandoned construction, with some exceptions.

Ultimately, we did drop reinforcing steel, mainly because local companies such as Soule and Judson Pacific Murphy had their own mills. We had to buy the steel either from their mills or from the mills of the larger corporations.

Relocation to New Plant in Hayward

Teiser: Were there other special kinds of work that you did that impelled your move to a central place?

Herrick: Yes. At an earlier meeting I mentioned two things that we did besides prison work and reinforcing steel. One was the winding of concrete tanks, mainly water tanks. In fact, we did do some presumably for the Korean war; I never thought of it. The government created a tremendous storage of fuel, which I presume was more like diesel fuel than gasoline. Those tanks were to be underground, and those were concrete tanks. We wound a lot of those.

The other one was the building construction of giant-sized corrugated iron, where the normal corrugated iron is about one and half inch-wide, and this was about two feet wide.

Teiser: What were the elements that Booz, Allen, and Hamilton found that you should look for in a new plant?

Herrick: I think we decided that we needed around six acres. We were forced to buy twelve acres, and I resented that. The land that we wanted was a unit of, as I recall, twelve acres. So we were forced to buy something that we didn't want, and we were very lucky that we did, and we made a considerable profit off the other six acres.

Teiser: Was there a location that the consultants suggested?

Herrick: No. It had to be on a rail siding; that was important. Access by highways, of course, was important. And, as I suggested earlier, being close to the home of the workers was important, too. We looked in Richmond, I remember, and San Leandro and Hayward. When I first went to the ultimate location of the plant, I told the real estate broker that I would look but I wasn't interested, because it was much too far out [laughs].

Teiser: What kind of plant did you build?

Herrick: We built as simple a plant as we possibly could, and we used this giant corrugated material very effectively; it's still there. It has always interested me that Mr. Dornside and his people, who are so progressive and so concerned about efficiency, have never altered the plant that we built initially. They've added to it, and they've used more outside work than we ever did--outside meaning outdoors.

Teiser: They do more of their work in the open?

Herrick: Yes. My experience and background was controlled by convention, and it was considered that steel fabrication should be under cover because the steel might rust, because the men should not be exposed to the weather, and because steel in those days was painted, and when dew is on the steel you can't paint it; it has to be dry. We stored steel out of doors because we had no choice, but we didn't perform many fabricating functions out of doors; very few. But the new Herrick Company, as operated by Hal Dornside, expanded, and then they used large forklifts instead of bridge cranes to move steel, and they paved larger areas, and part of the acreage we resented buying was used very effectively in the new operation.

Teiser: What were the other innovations that you did?

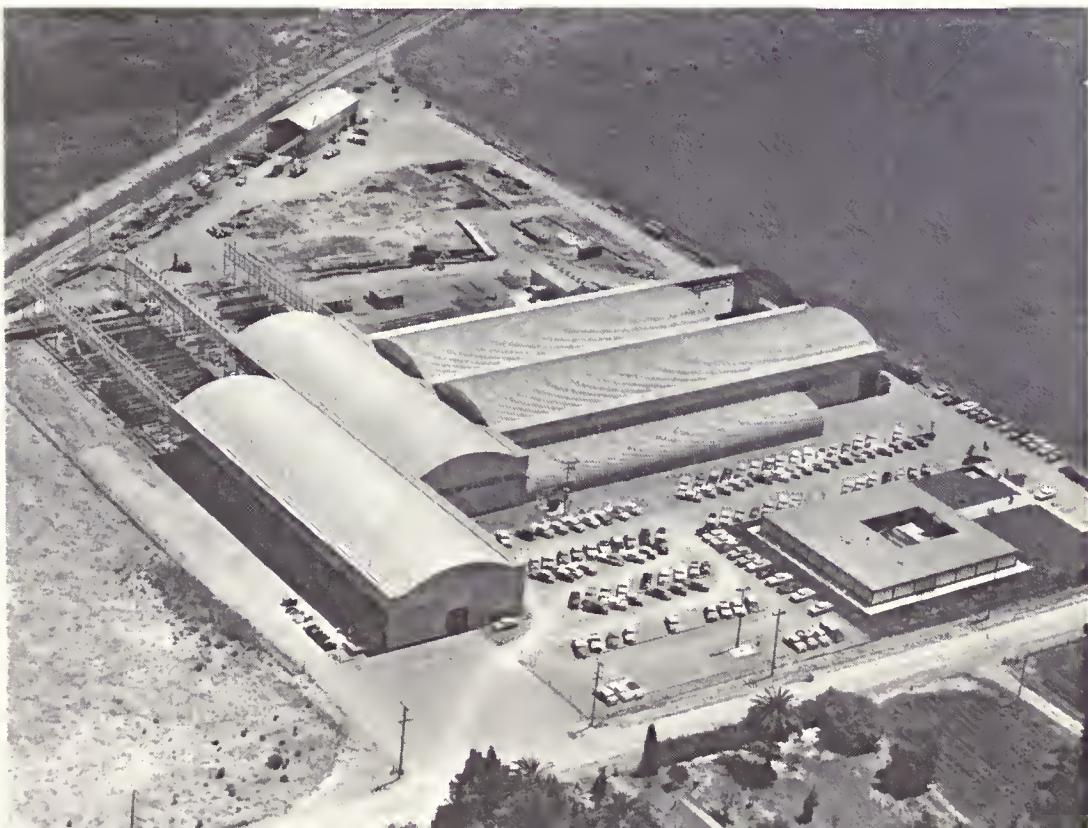
Herrick: Very few. When I was operating the company, and when my father was operating it, there were very few innovations that I can think of.

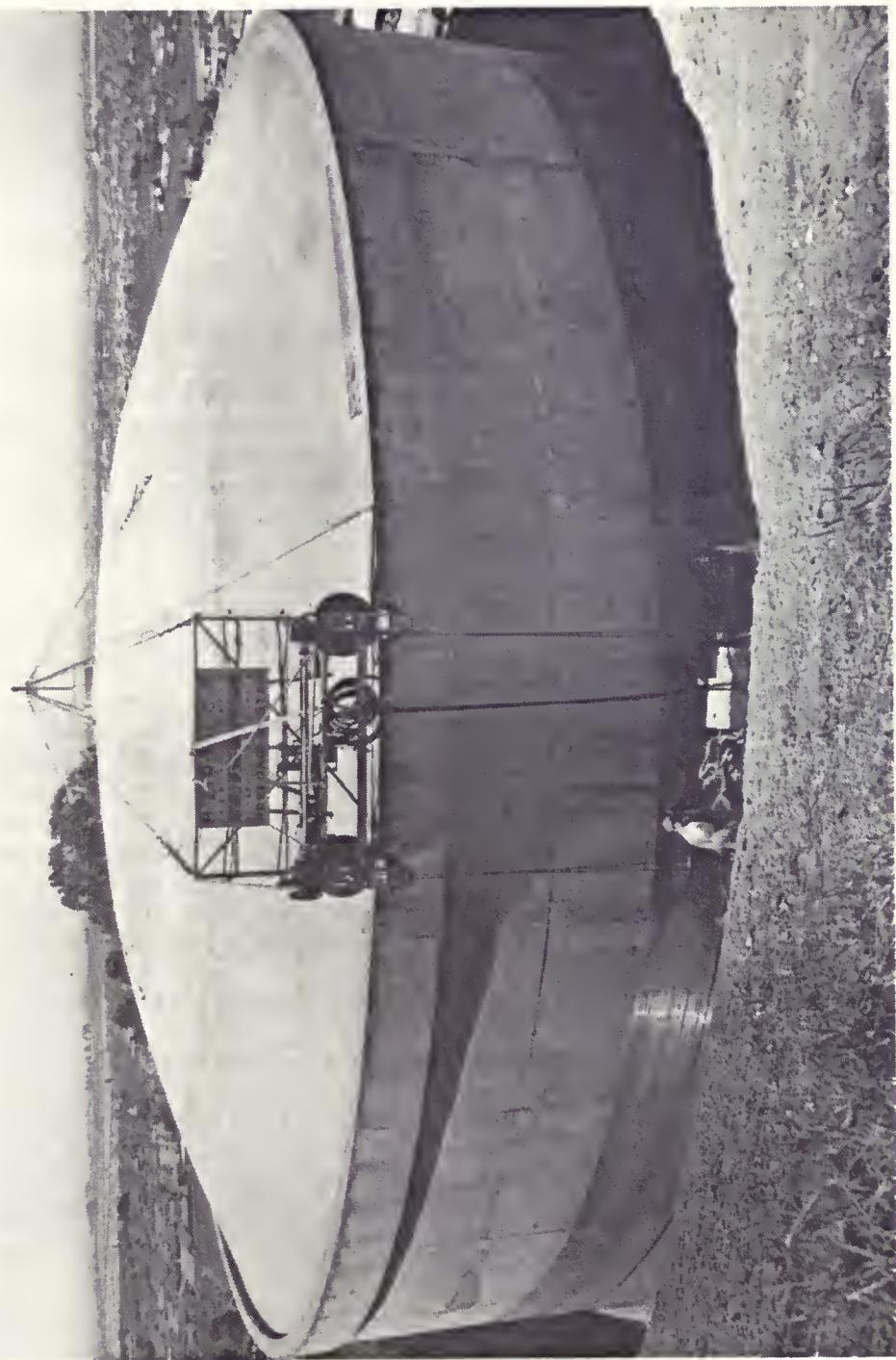
Teiser: Do you think that in your time you went after work more aggressively than your father had?



Above: Herrick Iron Works' plant under construction in 1957.

Below: The Herrick Corporation main office and manufacturing facility in Hayward, California. The manufacturing plant consists of 160,000 square feet of plant facilities situated on 34 acres. The plant, completed by Herrick and opened in 1957, is considered one of the most modern and complete manufacturing facilities for a plant of this type on the West Coast.





Prestressed concrete tank being reinforced with wire wrapping in 1957.

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Herrick: I think we were considered aggressive in selling, whether it was in selling fabricated steel--

Teiser: Both under your father and under yourself?

Herrick: Yes.

Competitors

Teiser: What do you think your competitors thought of you?

Herrick: I think they thought of us as bidding realistic prices, and they probably were able to guess what we would be bidding on because we were consistent. Typically we would hope to have, say, a hundred-ton job or a very complex job of any size. They knew that we sought complex frames and alteration work and so forth, in order to avoid the influence of the steel mill fabricating bids. The steel mills always sought--properly, or as a practice--large structures and very plain structures. The vicious part of the business was that the big steel corporations, U.S. Steel and Bethlehem, were competitors even on a ten-ton job. Because the cost of steel was such an important part of every job, they could charge themselves anything, at not only the price they wanted but the availability. During the terrible days of 1947 and '48, when steel was very scarce, they supplied themselves with all the steel they needed. The result was that they starved the smaller corporations. So that was a very undesirable part of the business, and that's one reason I wanted to get out of the field entirely.

Teiser: They covered a larger span of the industry.

Herrick: Properly they should have limited themselves, and they now do, to very large jobs, of which there were enough. But they didn't do that. They had big sales crews here in San Francisco and, as I say, they competed on every building job. There's no doubt they bid on it, but I know they couldn't have done it properly, it was so complex. From the very beginning that was a very bad part of the business.

Herrick: In 1947, I think, there was a Supreme Court decision rendered. The question was, could U.S. Steel buy out Consolidated Western? Consolidated Western was a large steel fabricator that was independent. They occupied the plant north of the airport in San Francisco. Maybe none of the buildings are there now, but they were there for many, many years. Probably the Justice Department brought the matter before the court. The decision was five to four in favor, and that was a disaster for the steel fabricating business. That permitted them to buy small or large plants and compete directly with medium and small fabricators. That is seldom referred to, but I happen to remember it because I know how extremely important it was.

Teiser: It suggests to me something that is not immediately relevant: does a steel plant have to occupy a certain kind of building, a specialized building?

Herrick: It's called a mill building, and it requires that it be virtually completely covered with cranes. The cranes may be as small as one- or two-ton capacity, but more properly they're ten- to twenty-ton. There are bridge cranes, which we used, and they rest on rails on each side of the building; or boom cranes that are hinged, which are just hoists, really. The efficiency of the plant depends a great deal on the design of the building. We created a very efficient plant, because of our experience, when we moved from Oakland to Hayward. It's still in use and still efficient. It was in great contrast to the original plant.

Going back to my father's character and situation, when he started the company he really did not plan for future expansion. He spent the money he knew he had. So when he moved from the rented property at Moore Drydock to his own property, he bought a quarter of a square block and built, for that time, the proper buildings and layout for a quarter of a square. But when we added the second quarter and the third quarter and the fourth quarter, it was very inefficient because he had not ever thought that he would ever be able to do that. Eventually we even crossed the street, and that was, of course, even less efficient. So when he died in 1947, I was left with a very, very inefficient plant, which meant that I had high costs compared to those who had more efficient plants.

Sale of Company

Teiser: When did you decide to sell the company?

Herrick: I remember very well one day when I made that decision. At that time we were employing I think 350 men. I was working to the extent of my energy and time, and I wasn't happy with that. I remember thinking that these 350 employees were dependent on my performance, and I didn't want to have 350 dependents. Of course, as I've stressed over and over again, the unfair competition of the mill fabricators was a considerable influence. By the time I made the decision I had joined the Young Presidents' Organization, and I had observed a number of other industries that appeared to me to be far more desirable, in which they didn't have this unfair competition. Also I observed fellow members of the organization who had sold their business; and so forth, and I listened to them and developed that decision from then. The plant was then in Hayward, and it was an efficient plant with low costs, and I tried to sell it, particularly to Kaiser.

I remember one effort in which I called on Kaiser. The office was in Oakland, and at that time I don't think they owned the plant in Napa; I think they were fabricating steel in Fontana, near Los Angeles. I suggested they would be better off having an efficient plant close to their main plant office. I got nowhere on that. I personally visited one or two other possible buyers; I've forgotten who they were, even. But I remember the visit to Kaiser very well.

Teiser: They didn't ordinarily expand by making acquisitions, did they?

Herrick: No.

Teiser: How did you happen upon Mr. Dornsife, then?

Herrick: When the Booz, Allen, and Hamilton survey was completed, they agreed that we needed a more efficient plant, and that our organization was very weak and that there was no second in command. They had already been told that I was searching for a general manager--that was the title that I had in mind at the time. Titles have changed now, currently, so I have to explain what titles mean. I was called the president, and the next in charge might ultimately have been a vice-president,

Herrick: but he would have been a general manager in such a small plant. They naturally listed the qualifications and so forth, and told me different ways to go about searching. In conclusion they said there was one man who would be ideal, but that I couldn't get him. And that's something you don't tell me [laughs]. When somebody says you can't get something, I get it.

So I approached Mr. Dornsife. He was working for a company that was somewhat competing with us, and he also had worked for a man who made a practice of buying out various companies and plants, much smaller than we think of now as merging and buyouts--very much smaller. He was involved in that practice and was enjoying the negotiations of buyouts. We had several conferences, and one time he said that he thought that he would enjoy working with us and that he would fit in properly, but he so much enjoyed the buying out of these other companies and negotiating, that he decided against it. That, again, challenged me. We spent a couple of hours, and he finally agreed to go to work for us. Tremendous joy on my part, because by then I was convinced that Booz, Allen, and Hamilton were quite right, that he was the man for us. And he was.

Teiser: This was before you had the thought of selling?

Herrick: Yes.

Teiser: How did you find out that he was interested in buying?

Herrick: Well, one thing that we did was to get away from the plant and have half-day conferences, the two of us, involving the operation of the company. On one such meeting he said that he had now worked for us for, I think, eight years at that time, and he decided that he still missed the buying of other companies, negotiating purchases, and that he would have to leave us. By that time I had made various efforts to sell the business, so I said, "Hal, why don't you buy our plant?" I'm sure he hadn't even considered that, and I had not either, of course.

Eighteen months later, with a minimum of savings assets, literally, he was able to buy the plant with the willingness of me, particularly, and my board of directors, and also the encouragement of the bank. It shows what can be done. His terms, of course, involved a relatively small down payment and strung-out payoff terms over several years. He paid it

Herrick: exactly on time, paid off entirely; he may have paid early, I've forgotten. At any rate, my relationship with him when he was general manager and my relationship with him as the owner of the company has been absolutely ideal.

Teiser: Would you explain just what it was you sold and what it was that you kept?

Herrick: We sold the assets and retained the proceeds. This corporation, in whose office we're meeting now, is the old corporation of the Herrick Iron Works, with name changes. But the proceeds of sale have been retained in the corporation.

Teiser: What do you call this corporation?

Herrick: It's called the Herrick Holding Company, and that's the proper use of the word "holding." Taxwise it's considered a personal holding company, which has a very severe penalty for operating as a tax avoidance operation.

Teiser: So you no longer have any interest in the fabricating company?

Herrick: None whatever. My eldest son sometime along the line bought a small block of stock. Mr. Dornsife at one time attempted to buy up all the shares that were held outside the family, and my son refused to sell.

Teiser: Are the shares very widely held?

Herrick: No. Now they're not held by outsiders at all. I don't know whether there are any other shareholders; I have no familiarity with that. My son may have been bought out, but I don't think so, though; I think he simply refused to sell.

Hal Dornsife

Jacobson: What made Mr. Dornsife such a desirable general manager?

Herrick: To answer that I have to tell you of his history. He was a nationally famous basketball player, what I guess you'd call All-American, or something like that now. His name became well-known, and he was bid to various universities.

Herrick: He had been brought up on a small truck farm (he'll probably tell you this.* I think this is true) near Chicago, and his basketball expertise was in high school in the community. The Standard Oil Company (of California) probably influenced him to go to USC, which he did. They offered him a job upon graduation, and so he worked for them in installation of refineries and so forth. He was a chemical engineer, and he was employed by them in that way.

Refineries were being built by a firm named C.F. Braun & Company, which still exists. C.F. Braun bid him out of Standard Oil, so he worked for them for a number of years. His work for C.F. Braun made him particularly attractive for us, because it was a productive job in which he was building what is called "turnkey" refinery contracts--"turnkey" meaning that the construction companies give them the plans to build it, and they build it up to the point where it's turned over to the company and all they need is a key to open the door, I suppose. So that experience made him particularly desirable.

After that he worked for a small plate fabricator, and also for this man who was buying up plants. Of course, what I'm telling you is my memory of his career. But those things all contributed to his being desirable.

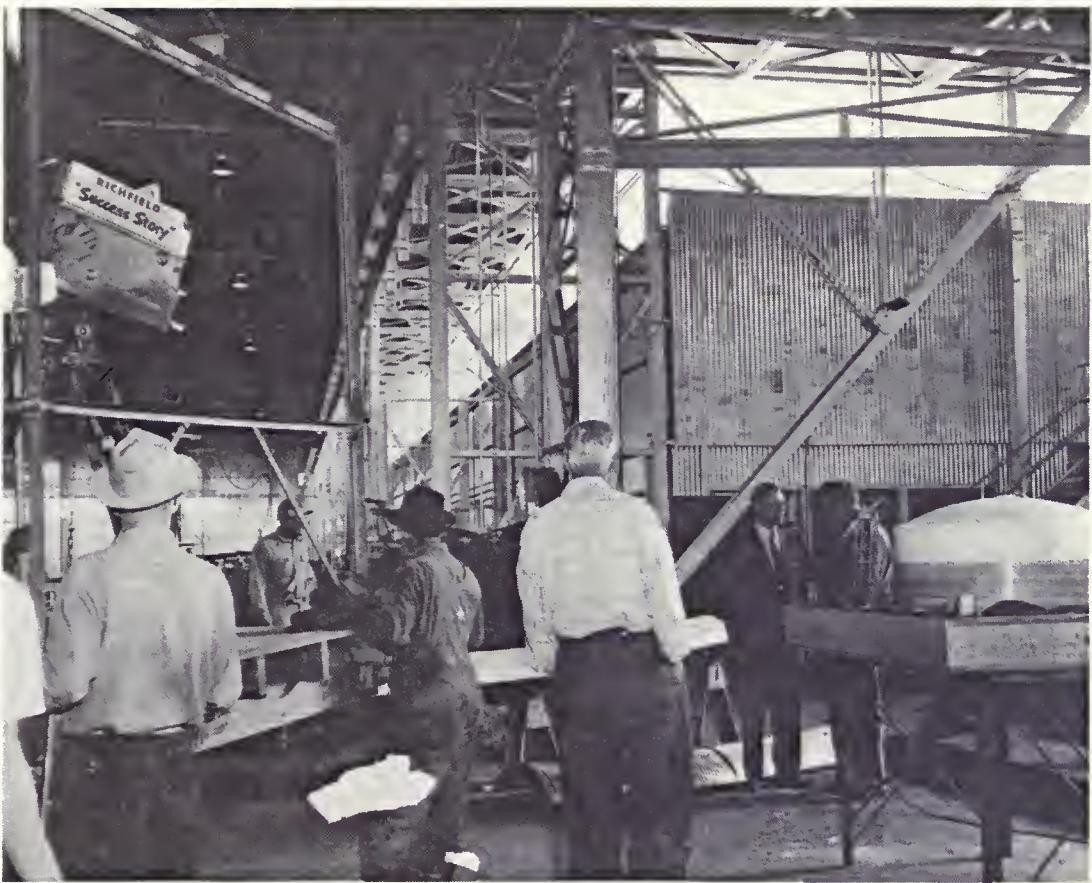
Teiser: What personal qualities did he have that made him so effective?

Herrick: I was not as aware of them then as I became aware. I've never, in all fields at all times, seen anyone work as hard as he has worked--sometimes a matter of hours, always a matter of concentration. People who have observed the flourishing of the company after I sold it, even including my wife, have said, "Aren't you sorry you sold it?" I've never been sorry I sold it, never for a day.

Teiser: Did Mr. Dornsife's chemical engineering background have a direct bearing?

Herrick: Yes. I may have mentioned earlier that my view of an engineering education is that it is something you are simply taught, and the important thing you are taught is self-discipline: how to study, how to work effectively. So it didn't concern me that he was a chemical engineer instead of a civil engineer or a structural engineer. It didn't concern

*An interview with Mr. Dornsife is in process.



Stephen Gale Herrick, second from right above, and Harold Dornside, left below, being interviewed for the Richfield "Success Story" television program in 1957.





Herrick Iron Works' Hayward plant interior being photographed for Richfield's "Success Story" television program in 1957.

Herrick: me, either, that he was not a business major. That would have been preferable, but he'd had sufficient varied experience so that this lack of business administration was not important.

In contrast, I'd had no outside experience, and that's why I sought knowledge of other companies in such organizations as the Young Presidents' Organization. That was an effort to fill gaps in my education.

Industry Overview: 1930-1960

Teiser: Developments in the steel industry from 1930-1960--many of these subjects you've discussed as you've gone along.

Herrick: I think so. I keep thinking about what has happened to the fabricated steel business from the technical, production standpoint. The progress from the use of red-hot rivets to welding to impact, high-tensile bolts is revolutionary and very effective.

Jacobson: How did that change your operations?

Herrick: The technique of rivetting and heating rivets required considerable skill. The heating and driving of rivets takes a four-man crew. Rivets are tossed distances of thirty or forty feet and caught in a cone-shaped metal catcher and fed into the hole, and so forth. We went from there to welding, where only one man did the welding. The impact wrenches are somewhat similar. Impact wrenches may be a two-man crew; I don't know, because that developed after I left the industry.

Jacobson: How did the unions respond to some of these innovations and changes in technology?

Herrick: I can't answer that, because some of these developments took place after I left the business. We did a good deal of welding, and again, because I like to be as familiar as I can, I tried to do some welding just to get a feel for it. Also, when I was an ironworker I did rivet-catching, I remember.

Teiser: Did the union put up many specific rules for welding?

Herrick: They may have; I don't know. There is a class of welder called a certified welder, and much work requires certified welders. The typical auto mechanic thinks he can weld, but in structural work it has to be high-quality welding: high density, and subject to test. I don't know whether they asked for premium wages for those or not; I don't recall. I don't think I've made enough point of this: that in my view the ironworkers' union was one of the better unions. For example, where a riveting crew had four men, they were not as likely to say that if you're going to weld you have to have four men there, too. That type of thing has gone on in other skills. They would recognize welding as an important new skill and they would favor it. The ironworkers always favored the apprenticeship program, for example. I had visited the International in St. Louis, and I knew the International president.

The ironworkers gained a bad reputation in San Francisco. There was what was called the Independence Day bombing, in which a man named [Tom] Mooney and another man were accused of bombing at a parade. This was immediately before the First World War, I think. Mooney was a member of the ironworkers union, so the union reputation suffered from the publicity given to the Mooney trial. It was generally thought that Mooney was not guilty; enough people thought he was not guilty, but I think he was accused and I think he lost. He was later pardoned.

Teiser: If your father were to have gone into the business in 1960, when you got out of it, would he have recognized it?

Herrick: No, he wouldn't recognize it. He would have disagreed with my sale of it, I'm sure. As far as our activities were concerned, he would not have recognized it as an offshoot of the old company.

Teiser: It had evolved that much!

Herrick: We were performing larger and larger contracts at the time, larger than he would have gone after.

Teiser: He probably would have approved.

Herrick: Oh, yes, I think he would have approved of that. And he would have approved of our move to Hayward and our well-laid out, efficient plant. He would not have approved of our abandonment of his plant.

Teiser: Who did the actual layout of the new plant?

Herrick: We involved our superintendents, and I was involved somewhat. We had one employee who may have had some experience, I don't know. I remember there was one man, whose name I don't recall, who was given the responsibility of building the plant. He superintended it and became our representative in the building. Of course, we had no contract; we were our own contractor, and naturally supplied our own steel and our own coverings.

Teiser: That takes us to the end of this section. We'll have one more meeting on your extracurricular activities.

Herrick: Oh, good. I'll enjoy that.



Stephen Gale Herrick holds flag presented by Hayward plant neighbor in 1957.



Herrick Iron Works office and shop employees at Hayward plant in 1957. Stephen Gale Herrick, front row, ninth from left.

VI NON-BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

[Interview 5: February 18, 1988]##

Teiser: Today we will consider your non-business activities. Later on, as you know, we will be asking you about the Hedco Foundation.

Book Collecting

Teiser: Since much of your activities seem connected with books, why don't we start with those? You told us earlier about your early interest in reading.

Herrick: I don't remember being an avid reader. I had to study hard in college, but I remember a few things: I read almost everything I could find of Ernest Hemingway's. Aside from that I did very little reading until later in life.

But I had a project. I found that as I was doing reading there were often references to several subjects that I had never touched on. For example, there were often reference to James Joyce's Ulysses and to Proust's Remembrance of Things Past. So I read both of those; in fact, I read them both twice. Then I followed up by reading Thucydides, for example, and I read Gibbon. In other words, it was plugging holes. I read all of Chaucer.

Teiser: You read those by yourself?

Herrick: Yes, oh, yes. I had some interesting experiences. If you talk to someone who is inexperienced and say that you read Thucydides, they think it would be very obscure and difficult to read. It's not difficult at all; it's very pleasant to read.

Teiser: Do you re-read these now?

Herrick: Often, yes. I re-read Ulysses, I re-read Proust.

Teiser: You read current novels, too, do you not?

Herrick: Yes. I collected Malcolm Lowry and John Hawkes, an American novelist. I find that I am more interested in avant garde writing rather than the ordinary modern novel.

Teiser: You collected John Mortimer, didn't you?

Herrick: I did, almost accidentally. My interest in drama led me to him, and I found also that he did write some novels. I gave Jim [Hart] one that I happened to run across.

Teiser: Do I recall that you have given some of your collections away?

Herrick: Yes. I started collecting about fifteen or twenty years ago, and at that time I lived in an apartment with a great many shelves and had no problem of space at all. But about four years ago we sold that apartment, and I had the problem of what to do with my book collection. I did several things. One is, as you can see here, that I moved part of it down to this office. But in addition to that I contributed about a third of it to The Bancroft Library, to the Gleeson Library, to Stanford special collections, to the public library, and to Mills College. In each case I knew what they collected, and in each case I knew the head of the special collections, so I was able to confer with them and offer them things that they wanted or needed.

The case I always like to remember is the Vale Press. I had a great many of the Vale Press books, I think about two-thirds of the total number. I offered them to Stanford, and they said that they had Vale Press but there were some gaps. They lacked only three, and I was able to give them the three they lacked; so now they have a complete collection of Vale Press.

Herrick: I also had a Welsh press called Gregynog, and I had a complete set of those in one form or another: they also had some very deluxe issues and fine bindings, but the initial printings were my collection. But I had a complete set, and I gave them to the Gleeson; they didn't have any. So I was the hero at the Gleeson Library, too.

I gave my Malcolm Lowry to Bancroft because I discovered that Jim Hart knew about Malcolm Lowry and appreciated the value. One very rare Malcolm Lowry was given to me by my wife, Marion, so I told him that I couldn't give that to him, but I'd put a letter in it and say that upon my decease it was to go to The Bancroft Library. It was the first edition of a book that Lowry wrote when he was a student at Cambridge. Can you imagine an American publisher publishing a book of a college student?

Teiser: When you collected (and perhaps you still do) did you collect many editions? For instance, did you collect every edition of Under the Volcano?

Herrick: I made an effort to collect everything that related to each of the collection subjects that I followed. In the case of Lowry, I guess I had all of his works, and I had one in Danish or something like that, a translation. I would have bought others, but I simply dropped further Lowry collecting. Collectors will tell you, and I have discovered, that as soon as you have obtained your objective you start losing interest.

Teiser: In the case where there is one very popular book that gets reprinted frequently--

Herrick: Under the Volcano is an excellent example of that.

Teiser: Is that part of collecting, collecting every edition--?

Herrick: Oh, yes, for several reasons. They have different prefaces often, and sometimes different illustrations. It's significant that Under the Volcano was so important that it's used in colleges teaching writing, and it's available in several paperback copies. The history of the publishing of Under the Volcano was very amusing and fascinating. I've read about that a number of times. Lowry received letters of acceptance from publishers on the same day in Mexico, from the United States, and Great Britain.

Teiser: Perhaps this is the time to bring up the local "book world."

Herrick: As I said, I felt it was important in contributing books to offer books that already interested the libraries' collections, instead of setting them out on a new collection. For example, I doubt that it would mean very much to offer a collection of Lowry to Gleeson Library. I did give Gleeson Library a collection of Mary Webb, who was an English writer. I ran into her by accident. The collections of authors that I have made were generally suggested purely by coincidence. I read Under the Volcano along the line somewhere and just gradually developed an interest in Lowry.

Teiser: How did you happen to come upon Mary Webb?

Herrick: She's an Englishwoman who wrote in the twenties. She wrote a number of novels. Gleeson Library seemed to appreciate them because they cover that period of English and American literature. Again, each subject of a collection has a long story that is interesting. Mary Webb was a rather simple English girl, and her husband thought nothing of her writing at all. And she didn't think too well of it, either. One of the prime ministers of England discovered one of her books and it was quoted, and suddenly she became popular.

Teiser: I'm trying to trace your interests--how you became interested in her?

Herrick: I'm trying to remember. Again, it was a matter of coincidence. I think my wife, Marion, had a few books from her family, and one of them was one of Mary Webb's books. Concurrently I discovered another copy somewhere, so I became more and more interested. Those I gave away.

I'm afraid that some things I've said indicate that my objective often was to have complete collections of one thing or another. But I determinedly avoided that, because generally the issues of a certain printer, for example, are not uniformly fine. Some are superior and some are not. Generally when I got into collecting complete collections, it was again simply because I suddenly discovered that I had 90 percent; I might as well fill it out.

Teiser: You collected more by author than by printer?

Herrick: No. My principal collection is in fine print. I have some William Morris. I have one incunabulum, known as Colonna, which is the most valuable book I have, and it is a beautiful copy. The Greek name for it is Hypnerotomachia Poliphili; it took me a long time to learn to pronounce that. It's a mystical book with a tremendous number of woodcut illustrations printed by Aldus. No one knows who made the illustrations. No one knows why the book was published. I went to the trouble to go to Stanford, because I found that they had a copy of an English translation of the first section of the book. I looked it up in the library and made a copy of some of the English quotations, because I knew people would ask what it's all about. The book concerns the erotic dreams of a monk [laughs]. It's a book that's often on exhibit, and I remember aspiring to have it when I saw it in the New York Public Library on exhibit.

Teiser: That's just one of a kind; it doesn't fit in any place?

Herrick: It doesn't fit in any place in my collection, no. I just wanted at least one incunabulum, and if I wanted one I'd better have a beautiful one. This is exquisite. It lives up to my standards of private presses and fine printing as a work of art.

Teiser: The other presses--

Herrick: It's easy to talk about them because they're all behind you [in the bookcase]. I see the Vale Press, I see the Doves Press, Allen Press, Ashendene. I have three examples of Bremer Presse, a German press. I have a number of Nash: I have the greatest Nash publications, such as the Dante-- right above the picture there, next to the clock are the four volumes of the Dante. And scattered copies of Grabhorn. I always am interested in small corners of book collecting. Over your head on the top bookshelf is an interesting collection of the work of a commercial printer who was a journeyman and a bachelor. He lived in New York and had a small press in his room in the YMCA. On weekends he would go home and dream up printing projects and print these little ephemera. All those uniform boxes up there are his.

Teiser: What was his name?

Herrick: John Fass is his name, and he called it the Hammer Creek Press. I ran into him because I was collecting Victor Hämmer (pronounced Hämmer), which is spelled the same way. So in the catalogue you run into Hämmer and Hammer.

Teiser: Do you collect any Valenti Angelo?

Jerrick: Somewhat. Valenti knew Fass, and the great bookseller in New York, Herman Cohen, knew Fass. Herman sold me some of these.

Teiser: Do you collect Hoyem?

Herrick: Somewhat. You see Flatland up there. Andy Hoyem really lost me when he got up into four figures. One of the most flattering events in my book history was for me to be invited to share in the financing of the printing of Moby Dick. I refused because it didn't look like a good bet, and it turned out that I missed something very wonderful.

Teiser: Have you invested in any small presses?

Herrick: Yes. I find that investing teaches you a great deal, through the initial investigation and the experiences during the investigation. The most successful investment I made was in the third Grabhorn catalogue, published by Grabhorn-Hoyem. I went in at the invitation of Warren Howell, and shared in that, and rapidly got my money back. Jack Stauffacher came in once and suggested that I might be interested in the publication of an important book on type design by a Hungarian named Kis. I financed that. That was not successful, but I learned a lot about it. I learned not to do it again.

Another one that I went into with Warren Howell was the Nonesuch Press bibliography. Of course, when Warren died there was the problem of the settlement of the Nonesuch and the Kis, which were not completed projects; they were not sold out. Mrs. Howell, Warren's widow, was very easy to deal with and very generous. Virtually I was given both remaining books, even though Warren had an investment in both of them.

I also invested once in a couple of play productions in New York. Those were most unsuccessful.

Book Collectors Organizations

Teiser: Let's turn to the book world and these overlapping groups.

Herrick: Last week was a fairly typical one, this week and last week--a period of about ten days. We had a memorial service for Adrian Wilson, we had a meeting of the Colophon Club on Monday, a meeting of the Roxburghe Club on Tuesday, and the [Friends of The] Bancroft Library on Sunday. So that in a few days there were four events that interest all serious book lovers and book collectors. I didn't attend the Colophon; I attended The Bancroft, the Roxburghe, and the memorial service for Adrian.

Teiser: You didn't go to the Book Club on Monday night, I guess.

Herrick: No. There was that, too! That is a sort of routine thing, and I don't actually enjoy that because I don't like cocktail parties. I don't like standing around and gossiping and sipping cocktails. I like to mix my own cocktails and drink them at my own speed.

Teiser: All of those--the Stanford Library support organization, and the Gleeson Library Associates--

Herrick: Neither Gleeson nor Stanford happened to have anything in the last week; I don't think they did, at least.

Teiser: Gleeson has something tonight.

Herrick: The only one of the activities that I have not joined is the Davis book collecting--whatever they call it, [the Library Associates] at UC Davis. Of course, I wouldn't think of going as far as Sacramento [to the Sacramento Book Collectors' Club], either.

Teiser: There is so much overlap, and practically the same people--

Herrick: And the same days. I was the one who suggested that the Book Club volunteer to be a center, so that if any book organization wanted to schedule an event in the next six months or so, they'd simply phone and ask if there was anything going on, say, on February 18, and if there were they could shift the meeting. The facilities still exist, but few pay any attention to it. Stanford never has phoned the Book Club to ask about advance--

Teiser: That's the least overlapping, I think.

Herrick: Overlapping is very annoying, because you're torn between two meetings that you want to attend of special interest. I don't even like to go out two or three nights in succession.

Teiser: It implies a quite vigorous interest, doesn't it?

Herrick: Exactly. And I think to be a book collector without vigorous interest is a complete waste of time. It is my pleasure to know a great deal about the printers, some of them personally, and to read up about authors, and so forth.

Teiser: How many people do you think there are who are really--

Herrick: Well, the memorial service for Adrian Wilson was a good example. In my estimate there were at least two hundred people there, and there were probably another hundred who hadn't heard about it. My announcement of it arrived two days after the service. In fact, one member of the Roxburghe Club asked me what I had been doing, and I said I went to the Adrian Wilson service. He said, "Well, I never heard about it. Where was it?" I said I had never gotten any announcement, and at that time I had not even gotten the announcement. So there must be at least three hundred people in that world. The Roxburghe Club has had a great difficulty in holding its membership down to a hundred.

Teiser: Can you tell a little about each of them? The Book Club is the largest, is it not?

Herrick: I'd be happy to review them. The Book Club grew, during a seventy-five year period, from a membership I think of twenty to a limit now, I believe, of a thousand. Their function is to provide a center for printers and book collectors, including a very fine library for students. They have a program of lectures, too, which is on no particular schedule.

In the case of Stanford, you have the Associates of Stanford University Libraries, which is active and successful. I was on the initial board of directors and served two terms on that, so I knew a lot about it.

Herrick: Gleeson Library Associates is part of the Special Collections Department at the University of San Francisco. For a small university it's an important special collections department.

Of course, Bancroft is most significant, being the special collections department of UC Berkeley.

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Teiser: Each of these is a little different from the other?

Herrick: Yes, more in practice than in objective. I find, for example, that Gleeson seems to attract widows who have nothing else to do and really have very little interest in books. I've given talks at the Gleeson Library and I've attended a great many of them. I was on that board for several years--generally these boards have a limit on the number of years you can serve. You are elected, for example, for two years, and you can serve two terms but no more than two, which is a very sound practice. I concluded long ago that I wanted to be on fewer boards and have less activity.

Bancroft, as you know, has perhaps two or three meetings per year, and Gleeson likewise. While I was on the board at Stanford a new president was elected, and he wanted to know what to do about meetings of the Associates. I had already the opinion that they had many too many meetings. I said, "Do you realize that last year you had thirteen meetings? I don't think there's any need for thirteen meetings." But I was voted down immediately, because all the participants were very happy to have an opportunity to go to thirteen meetings in a year [laughs].

Teiser: In The Bancroft, I believe you have been a very vigorous fund-raiser for the Mark Twain papers.

Herrick: Yes. That was partly due to coincidence. As you'll hear later, I'm on the board of the Hedco Foundation, and Hedco became a potential source of funds. Also, a lawyer I had used a good deal when I was in business was in charge of the Skaggs Foundation, and that was also a source of money. The lawyer was very friendly and trusted me, so I was able to get that money. And, as I think I told you when you and Willa Baum were here, fundraising repels many people and it doesn't bother me at all. I like fundraising.

Teiser: You gave us some good tips. You have a very practical attitude toward it.

Herrick: I've actually studied that, to some extent. When I lived in New York I went to the New School for Social Research, which is an adult university in Manhattan. There I attended a class every Saturday morning on the founding of a repertory theater, and it was all about fundraising. It was conducted by one of the managers of the Metropolitan Opera.

Bookbinding

Teiser: Perhaps we should ask about your work as a fine binder.

Herrick: You have a pretty good record of the binding.* I think in that record I mentioned the organization of the hand bookbinders and the fact that I didn't believe it could be done, but I had to do it because I was forced to do it by my teacher, Peter Fahey. That's also an activity.

Teiser: Have you continued binding the last four or five years?

Herrick: I've worked continuously, of course. I have bound two books with paper covered boards, which is a technique I had not tried. It turned out very successfully. I'm going to have them on exhibit at the annual exhibit of the hand bookbinders at the [California] Historical Society in April.

Teiser: Doesn't paper somewhat defeat the idea of hand binding, because it's less permanent than leather?

Herrick: No. Well, I never thought of it as being less permanent than leather, for example. In the first place, the places where wear can occur are covered with leather. I'll show you one: this is the Aesop of Thomas Bewick, a Book Club publication. It's a lovely little book; there's an original page of Bewick's. So that's a new technique, but aside from that I can't think of anything I've done that's new since I was interviewed before.

*In The Hand Bookbinding Tradition in the San Francisco Bay Area, a group of oral history interviews conducted 1980-1981, Regional Oral History Office, The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley, 1982.

Teiser: Have you continued at the same rate?

Herrick: Initially I did work about six or seven hours, but now I can only work about four hours--that is, two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon. And I find I've become more lazy.

Teiser: Do you work with other bookbinders ever?

Herrick: No. I know all the bookbinders and admire many of them. In this case, for example, I learned to do that technique by going to another binder, and she taught me how to do it.

Teiser: Who was that?

Herrick: Joann Miller.

Teiser: What is the name of your group?

Herrick: The Hand Bookbinders of California.

Teiser: Have you had any annual exhibits since Warren Howell's shop was closed?

Herrick: Yes, we've had, I think, two. That really broke down the rhythm of having that space available. So we searched for a suitable place for our annual exhibit. We had one at the Legion of Honor. It was beautifully set up but, as you know, all museums are very concerned about lighting, so most of us were not very happy with the display of the books because the brilliant colors died in the dull lighting. The other was in the vestibule of the Equitable Building on Montgomery Street at Sutter, and that was sort of half successful. Now we've used the Historical Society, and they seem to want us and have some very nice exhibit spaces. So I think we'll give a permanent exhibit there every year, every spring.

At Warren Howell's John Howell-Books, we always scheduled it for the three weeks before Thanksgiving, because it did not interfere with his Christmas trade and for other reasons. But now apparently it's going to be in the spring.

Teiser: Do people buy books from that exhibit?

Herrick: The intent was that it stimulate collection, sale of bindings, and also stimulate the study of bookbinding. We always supplied Howells with announcements of our society and what it cost to join, and so forth. I don't think it had very much effect.

As you know, my activity was, and still is, to go to the Bohemian Club to play dominoes most noontimes. One man that I played with strolled up Post Street one day, past Howell's window, and seeing a collection of strange bindings he stopped and stared at it and saw a label that Gale Herrick had bound a book. He said, "This isn't you, is it?" And I said, "It certainly is." [laughs]

I was digging up the exhibitions I've entered, and I'm ready to report on that. The annual exhibit, formerly at John Howell Books: I entered every single one from the first one to the present. In addition I have been in other exhibits: I've been at The Bancroft Library and at Stanford. And I set up a binding exhibit at the Bohemian Club. We have had three or four binders, but I'm the only one now that's a member of the club. But the one I'm most proud of is the exhibit in Paris, in which I was invited to exhibit along with other people in 1984. The name of the society is Reliure Brochure Dorure. And I exhibited at Yale once, and at the Botanical Society in Brooklyn.

I've only been turned down once, and I was shocked to be turned down by the Guild of Book Workers, which staged an exhibit a year or two ago. I submitted two or three books--whatever the limit was--and I was refused! I had never been refused before. Subsequently they published a catalogue, and I was very glad they had not included my bindings, because the standards they had of avant garde bindings and non-books, and things of that sort, were indicative of an exhibit that I would not want to be mixed up with.

Teiser: This has been a trend, has it not? The first I was aware of it was Philip Smith making book walls.

Herrick: Oh, sure, I know him very well.

Teiser: He was perhaps not the first to use books for non-book purposes--

Herrick: He may be the first, I don't know.

Teiser: Has it gone further than that?

Herrick: Oh, yes. There are several others that do it now, but I don't think very highly of them. To me it's what I call a non-book. And of course there are all kinds of other exhibits of non-books, such as books of stone, books with cavities in them, and rotted corners, and all kinds of funny things.

Teiser: What do you think of the William Everson book in the wood case?

Herrick: You mean Granite and Cypress? A beautiful thing. I thought that was very successful, and I'm sorry I didn't buy it. But the problem with that was that it was intended for display on a table, and I wouldn't want to devote that much space to it.

Teiser: Do you buy reading copies of fine press books sometimes?

Herrick: Oh, yes, on several occasions. For example, Lew [Lewis] and Dorothy Allen had published a book which I had bought in loose sheets to bind. If I became interested in the book, and because it was fine print on very fine paper and so forth, I knew that I didn't want to risk damaging it by reading it; I would go out and buy a paper copy of the same novel and read the paper copy so as not to damage the fine, expensive printing.

Teiser: I don't know what that says about fine printing.

Herrick: People are critical. There's an argument about whether you should wash your hands before you read a book, and so forth, or that a book should be something to use. But considering the effort in producing such a book and its binding, I favor the idea of treating it very carefully. Furthermore, the condition of a book of that variety very much influences the value. Just one little defect, a thumb mark on a page by somebody who was handling butter, for example, influences the value.

Teiser: Wasn't it Morgan Gunst who made people wear white gloves?

Herrick: Yes. I have some white gloves in there. I never have the nerve to ask somebody to put them on, but I have them anyway. But I do tell people to go wash their hands. I wash mine first, and then I say, "Here's the towel; go ahead and wash your hands, too." They don't always take kindly to the suggestion.

Teiser: Is there anything further you'd like to say about bookbinding?

Herrick: I mentioned that my main objective was not to have complete collections, that it was only a coincidence if I did. An outstanding case is one of the finest English presses, the Ashendene Press. I have nothing in the Ashendene Press prior to their tenth year, only in the later years, because I don't think their earlier things were that beautiful.

Teiser: Is the work of the Allen Press changing?

Herrick: Their work has changed a lot. You see, they had a big press set up in their home in Marin County. Then they moved out of that place and gave the press to the University of Utah, I think, so they now use a much smaller press.

Teiser: And has that affected their work?

Herrick: Yes, I think it has. The most recent product was a collection of Pushkin short stories. I've forgotten who illustrated them, but it's a rather precious book. Many of the Allen's books are the finest done in the western world.

Theatre Activities

Teiser: The theater--

Herrick: I think we should talk about theater, and I think we should talk about music. As you may have gathered, my book collecting has tapered off substantially, partly because of space and partly because I have obtained the books I wanted to obtain. There are very few gaps in my collection that I would fill now if I had the opportunity.

Herrick: In theater my interest rose at one time and has tapered off substantially, mainly because the style of theater has changed. In college I attended a number of performances in the church west of the campus (you may remember the name of the director; he was a very great director and was offering a number of fine productions. It was a man who subsequently went to Hollywood).* At any rate, that's the earliest case I know of actually attending good semi-amateur performances. That continued, and at one time a friend came to me and said, "You must be on the board of the Actors' Workshop." I said, "No, Marion and I have been subscribers for a number of years and we enjoy what we see there." And the woman said that she would arrange for me to meet the producers, Jules Irving and Herbert Blau.

I did arrange a meeting with Jules Irving. I invited him to lunch at the Bohemian Club, and we talked for three and a half hours, we got along so well together. At that initial meeting I said, "I'm bored with what I'm doing now. I've sold my business, and I'd like to be a full-time volunteer for Actors' Workshop." He first talked to Herb Blau, and then he accepted. So I had a desk and an office exactly one block from here down in the Marines Memorial Building with Herb Blau, Jules Irving, Allen Mandell--all four of us were in the same tiny room.

That contact lasted only two or three years, but the greatest advantage I got was a feeling of very complete contact with theater. I was sufficiently crazy about theater that I wanted to see how it was put together, and I wanted to see the economics of it, the personal relations, and everything else. I saw it, and I enjoyed it.

In the midst of my working for Jules and Herb, they were bid to New York. They made the mistake, it turned out, of taking their hand-picked eighteen people from the entire company, hiring very few New Yorkers and moving in with their own company. I was flattered that they invited me to go with them, and I went home and asked my wife, Marion, if she minded moving to New York. Because she is very considerate of my interests she agreed to move to New York, and I lived there for a year and a half working for the Vivian Beaumont Theater at Lincoln Center. I even had a title: I was administrative manager. The New York Times published a little article that said, "A dollar a year man in California obtains a 100 percent increase in his salary; he's now paid two dollars." [laughs]

* probably Irving Pichel, ed.

Herrick: My deep interest before moving to New York was in "theater of the absurd." I attended some day classes at UC, and I attended a number of night classes and found great interest in the current productions of theater--that is, what was being written at the time.

The move to New York was an interesting one and the experience was a good one, but the enjoyment wore off. I had loved New York in the past and had travelled on business to New York a good many times. But I found that New York had changed substantially and was no longer as pleasant to live in or to be in. And the former Actors' Workshop, now the Vivian Beaumont and Repertory Theater of Lincoln Center, was coming more and more under the influence of Broadway. So I simply lost interest in it and came home.

Teiser: When did you come home?

Herrick: I probably came home about 1966.

Teiser: Was it after that that you became interested in bookbinding?

Herrick: Yes. I found myself playing dominoes with a nearly blind man who had been a bookbinder; that's all in the bookbinding questionnaire.

Teiser: Did the Actors' Workshop get absorbed in New York and lose its identity?

Herrick: The first thing that happened while I was still there was the resignation of Herbert Blau, and Jules was left running the theater himself and fighting his board of directors and fighting for money, and fighting the New York critics--we were always considered outsiders. He closed down the repertory theater finally and moved to Hollywood and finally died.

The whole character changed.

Teiser: Do you go to the theater much here now?

Herrick: When we returned to San Francisco, ACT [American Conservatory Theater] was becoming more and more active. I believe at that time I made occasional trips to New York to see productions there, and I also subscribed to ACT. I soon lost interest in that, and there was a gap of about ten years

Herrick: when I went to very few theater productions, very few. Now we are back as subscribers for ACT, but not too happy with what we see. I think it's much better than it has been. The current production is The Immigrant, which is a repetition of the plot, over and over again, of My Poor Dear Father, starting in I think with the Robert Anderson play called I Never Sang for My Father.

Music Interests

Teiser: When did your music interests develop? Were they later or were they concurrent?

Herrick: It's hard for me to trace that. The music interest has become extremely important. I have no knowledge of music except the history of music and the appreciation of music.

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Herrick: The only course I took was in music appreciation at the University of California when I was an engineering student. There is no part of my life that leads into an appreciation of music. My family was not musical, my father not at all, and my mother played the piano just for her own amusement. I think it must be dependent on the friends I made when I was in the university. There was a group of friends that I was with a good deal, and one of them was a composer, Bill Denny, and one of them was a musicologist, Lloyd Hibberd. Consequently their interests and activities threw me into the field of music--only from appreciation, though. I can't read a score; I can follow a performance on a score, but I can't tell you the key it's in or much else about it. I know the various signs used in writing music.

I subscribed to the symphony off and on, sometimes for the full season and sometimes for only a third of it. I subscribed to opera, but I don't think I ever subscribed to the full season. We always attend today, one or two or maybe three performances a year of opera.

I had become more and more active at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and enjoyed their all-day marathons. They just had one on Mendelssohn, and I attended that. I

Herrick: was there about six hours, I guess. I finally realized that I enjoy symphony and a few operas, hand-picked, of interest to me; but I enjoy almost all chamber music.

Because of listening to a great deal of music over the radio, I learned of the existence of a chamber music festival in Finland called Kuhmo. So last summer in July I travelled five thousand miles to hear chamber music. It is the most intense chamber music festival that exists.

Typically they have four concerts a day, sometimes a fifth. On one day I actually went to five concerts. I'm seriously considering returning. I remember when I left Finland I decided the hotel was very ordinary--barely adequate--and the food was hardly even adequate. The people were thought to be friendly; they were not antagonistic, but nobody spoke English, and for a period of ten days I didn't speak a word of English except over the telephone to my broker!

So I observed music festivals throughout Europe and throughout the United States, and there's none that has that much chamber music. Typically they have one concert on Saturday and one on Sunday; or in the case of Aspen, Colorado, for example, they have perhaps five or six a week. So to get such a concentration of chamber music, so beautifully chosen and beautifully performed--but it's a mystery to me; I don't know where the other people lived. There were as many as fifteen hundred people in the hall, and no place for them to live that I could see, no place for them to eat meals that I could see. I know the performers are almost all Europeans. I don't know whether they're paid, I don't know who chooses them, I don't know who started the festival. The one I attended was the eighteenth annual festival.

Teiser: Do you say that five different groups play each day?

Herrick: Yes. I counted the musicians; I think the performers were about a hundred and ten, and they formed different groups, some solo and some sextets and octets, many quartets, many sonatas. It spanned all the centuries of music. The earliest was English ballads, beautifully sung; some early Italian music; and the most recent had been composed in the last five years or so. People always ask if it was all Finnish music: it was a little Finnish music, but not much. They probably had long since worn out all the Sibelius they ever had [laughs], so there was no Sibelius.

Herrick: But I discovered that that's the important part of my life now, between hand bookbinding and music--attending [concerts] and listening to them over the radio.

Jocabson: Are your tastes in music as avant garde as your tastes in books and theater?

Herrick: That's quite apropos, and I've thought a lot about it. I favor avant garde music, but I'm very much aware that of all music written in the 1980s, for example, 95 percent of the people do not. There are a few names that I can mention: Crumb is probably the best one. He's a professor in the East who writes beautiful music currently. I think my music interests are very broad: I like jazz; I don't like rock; I generally don't like vocal music of any kind, whether chamber music or otherwise.

Teiser: Do you have a large record collection?

Herrick: I didn't think I had much of a collection, but there's an activity at The Sequoias retirement home where we live, in which they present a program every other Wednesday. I was on the committee that raised money for the equipment and was instrumental in choosing the equipment, and I started presenting programs (I only present one every three months or so; they're a good deal of work). I'm giving one on March 30, simply playing recordings of two Bach cantatas, one sacred and one secular--a beautiful wedding cantata, BWV 202; it's an exquisite thing. To introduce that to these people who are interested enough to come to the meeting but otherwise not as deeply interested in music as I, I always have to talk for ten minutes about what a cantata is, or who is performing it, where the words came from, and all the details of the music.

I did "Porgy and Bess," and in that case I recorded various songs on a tape off a record (I have a very good record). But I started counting my records, and I catalogued them recently. Dorothy, my secretary, will agree with that; she typed every single three-by-five card, and I have about 350 recordings and about thirty-five tapes, and the equipment to listen to them.

So that's what I'm doing when I'm retired.

Teiser: That's a very full retirement.

Herrick: Full and happy.

Does that pretty well cover things now?

Teiser: Unless you have other interests you'd like to discuss.

Herrick: Well, the subject of other interests is one I intended to talk about. I could be very much interested in ballet, for example, and I was so interested once. I could be very interested in ceramics, because we attended some exhibits in Japan that stimulated my interest. I could be very interested in graphics, and I did collect William Nicholson. But you have to limit yourself. I have the capacity to be interested in those things, but if I, for example, became interested in ballet, the time taken on that would be time taken from my radio listening and from my chamber music listening. As I say, I only just realized that I much prefer chamber music over any other form of music. So it's a matter of limitations. You know, I could be interested in horses, for example, or automotive equipment, or collect shells. I'm not tempted in those cases, but I am tempted in graphics and I was once very interested in ballet, but that was way back about 1940, I guess, or '39 or '38.

Teiser: Now that we have so much of it, you're less so?

Herrick: In those days it was all touring companies, and very fine ballet.

I think we've covered that. And we're going to get together on the foundation at another time.

Teiser: Yes.

VII HEDCO FOUNDATION

Foundation's Beginnings
[Interview 6: May 10, 1989]##

Jacobson: Why don't we start at the beginning of Hedco.

Herrick: I dug this out of the files, and that is for me the beginning.

Jacobson: It announces the first meeting of the board of directors in 1973. But there was an earlier meeting in January.

Herrick: Yes, it's apparent that there was, but I wasn't involved in that.

Jacobson: What do you know about why it was started?

Herrick: You see, I sold the company in 1960 to Mr. Dornsife. At the beginning, due to the burden of borrowing money and so forth, and due to poor business in steel fabricating, the first years were not particularly successful. I was still on the [corporation] board, so I had some idea of their progress. Considering the conditions, they were remarkably successful. But their profits were not by any means comfortable.

But twelve years later, in 1972, their profits were substantial and they were in a position to look forward to continuing profits. So due to the nature of the whole Dornsife family, which I'll describe later based on my observations, it was perfectly appropriate for them to think of an appropriate method to make contributions to possible applicants. The nature of the steel fabricating business is one of up and down activity, and consequently a foundation is an ideal method of making contributions.

Jacobson: Could you explain a little bit more why it was beneficial to set up a foundation given the ups and downs of the steel industry?

Herrick: This is a general thing; it would apply to them less so than some industries, but particularly in that industry at that time. I, for example, might have a very profitable year in which my security transactions might be profitable. And that year I might feel that I want to give, say, the University of San Francisco a generous gift. Then the next year it would not be as profitable, and yet USF would expect some support from me, and I wouldn't have the tendency to give them very much. A foundation can have a smoothing out effect, and it's particularly appropriate in the case of the Herrick Corporation and Hedco.

Jacobson: Is it a smoothing out effect because a foundation would be able to provide renewed support where an individual or corporate donor might not in the midst of economic downturns?

Herrick: Yes.

Jacobson: Is there a percentage of funds that comes from the corporation versus--?

Herrick: I presume there is, but that's the business of the corporation, so I don't know that.

I don't know what experience either Mr. or Mrs. Dornsife had had with foundations--probably none. With prosperity coming to them, they always lived in a very modest fashion compared to the practice of other people who would have that much income. Consequently, giving comes naturally to them.

Pass-through Accounts

Herrick: As you'll see later, not only does the corporation contribute annually to Hedco, but also the Dornsifes use what is called a pass-through account. I notice that you didn't mention that in your outline.

Jacobson: No, I didn't know about that.

Herrick: I use it, and no other director except Mr. and Mrs. Dornsife uses it. It's a privilege that anyone might have; you don't have to be a director. You simply give money to the foundation, and then tell the foundation how you want the money distributed. In my case, I had a stock in which I had considerable profit. I contributed a number of shares of that stock when I thought the

stock price was high. So it was like a savings account, which has now lasted for two or three years. The only problem for me is that I don't get any interest on the sum. But I wouldn't expect to, anyway.

Jacobson: The foundation gets the interest?

Herrick: Yes, in a minor amount. My contribution in December '86 was about \$18,000. So I've been cutting pieces off of that ever since, and there's still a balance. In fact, the [contribution to the] Father [William J.] Monihan oral history funds came from that source. [laughs]

The Dornsifes have done that in a much more major way. My pass through is insignificant, where theirs is far from insignificant. They have the same privilege that I have. In other words, they can designate that the Hedco Foundation will give their pass-through funds to any applicant. In fact, in the extreme--and I don't even know the explanation--I think they found some village or family in Central America and gave them a tiny amount of money.

At one meeting of the board of directors I pointed out that the practice in pass-through accounts was such that the foundation presumed that they had little influence over where the funds would go, and it was conceivable that in future times Hedco might be asked to contribute, for example, to a very controversial cause, such as abortion. I don't know whether it would be for or against, but it might be contrary to the board of directors' wishes. I simply went on record in the direction of caution. As far as my contributions are concerned, they're all to things like The Bancroft Library and so forth, and not controversial. And when I make a request I write a letter indicating the address of the charity that the funds are going to. From the very nature of it they know that it's tax exempt.

Funding for Health, Education, and Special Projects

Jacobson: What were the stated goals of Hedco when it was started?

Herrick: They were education and health, as indicated in the record. During the many years when it was exclusively education and health, I had at least two cases where I wanted to raise money, and yet I couldn't go to them for the money because my interests were those not covered by health or education. An example was when I sponsored an international exhibit of bookbindings, and we wanted to publish a catalogue. The principal expense of the catalogue, of course, was colored reproductions. We had ample

funds to publish the catalogue, but no funds to have colored illustrations. To have a bookbinding catalogue without colored illustrations is unthinkable. I raised the money as best I could without going to Hedco.

Subsequently they decided that a part of their funds--and they specified what that part was; I think at the beginning it was \$100,000--would be set aside for special projects, which I took to mean cultural. It turned out that that wasn't exactly the intent. But they do entertain applications from such things as the Mark Twain project, in which they have contributed \$50,000 on two occasions, sponsoring Huckleberry Finn and another Mark Twain book (I've forgotten which one). There's a third one now on application. They haven't come up with an answer on that, but I have great hopes. I'm active, of course in The Friends of The Bancroft Library.

Jacobson: How did they settle on health and education?

Herrick: They founded it, you see, and I wasn't involved in the founding at all. I don't think I knew that the foundation existed before I opened that letter that I showed you. So it was a total surprise. I don't think that they phoned and said, "Would you like to serve on the board?" or anything.

Jacobson: They just elected you, and then sent you a letter asking you to come to the meeting?

Herrick: Yes, I think so. However, I was active on the board of the corporation earlier. During the 1972-1973 period I was attending one meeting of the board a year. I no longer do that.

Jacobson: Did the Dornsifes have a personal interest in education and health?

Herrick: You're aware, I'm sure, having interviewed Harold Dornsife, of his earlier history. His entire career is based mainly on the fact that he received a scholarship for USC [University of Southern California]. He was born and reared near South Bend, and consequently he obviously feels great gratitude towards that university, and universities in general. As far as health is concerned, there's another interesting contact there, in which Mrs. Dornsife studied some science relating to health.

Jacobson: She was a pre-med student.

Herrick: I guess that was it. You see, I didn't know them at all before about 1952; I didn't even know they existed. I was led to Mr. Dornsife by a business consultant, who I remember said, "The ideal man for you"--they were trying to find a manager--"is

Mr. Dornsife, but you couldn't get him." [laughs] I remember that very well.

Setting Up the Foundation

Jacobson: I know you weren't in on the founding meeting of Hedco, but do you know from the early years of the foundation where they got their ideas about how to run it and what they should be like?

Herrick: At the outset they employed their lawyer, James Soper, a member of the [law] office that they normally use. For example, that office is the principal office of the Skaggs Foundation. It could well be that the source of some of the details came from the running of the Skaggs Foundation--which was not run, incidentally, by Jim Soper but one of his partners. Even today, and particularly earlier, I felt that they were trying to hide behind the law office and make believe that they didn't exist; or if they existed, there was no way to get in touch with them except through the law office. Of course, there are services that are available to the public. There are two of them which tell a great deal of detail, and quite accurately, as to board membership and recent history of giving.

Jacobson: The Dornsifes want to keep a very low profile.

Herrick: Yes, which was all to the good. They wanted to keep a low profile for a number of reasons. One, of course was that they didn't want to be bothered by direct requests.

Jacobson: And yet people do submit applications?

Herrick: I'm known to be on the board of Hedco by certain people, such as the Mt. Zion Hospital group. So they come to me and say, "We're considering applying for funds to buy an EKG machine; do you think that Hedco would consider that?" With the number of years (what is it, fifteen years?) that I've been active on Hedco, I know what is acceptable and what is not. I know, for example, that one of the features that Hedco likes is something they can see and put a label on. Of course, an EKG machine is ideal in that case.

Also, of course, there's always the matter of whether an application is for \$1,000 or \$2,000, or for \$600,000. There's the ideal size, in other words, that Hedco can afford, and also what appeals to them. They keep breaking the borders every once in a while, generally not downward but upward.

Board Members

Jacobson: When you were invited to be on the board, there were five non-family members and three family members.

Herrick: Four family members--Mr. and Mrs. Dornstife, their daughter, Dorothy Jernstedt, and their son, David. Those are the only children.

Jacobson: Do you know how they selected the other board members?

Herrick: Yes. I was the person who agreed to the sale of the corporation. As I say, I doubt that I knew them before 1951 or '52. But by this time I had had a great deal to do with Mr. Dornstife. Jim [James S.] Little is the minister of their church and a very fine person. Clint Newell, who is now deceased, was an active member in their community, and probably a member of the church; I don't know. Dr. [William] Picard has been very effective as a director, and I presume he was the physician to the Dornstifes, but I don't know that. I know there was a social contact there. Gerald Ross was a fellow worker with Hal Dornstife in an earlier employment. They worked together, apparently, very well.

It turned out to be a very good board, at present particularly. Because Jernstedt, for example, lives in some Midwest city, and Ross lives in a suburb of Los Angeles; so there's a geographical spread there. I am the only one on the board who has any particular cultural leanings. Jim Little is very good on the board because he is able to lecture us on morals and ethics, which I, for example, like to listen to, but I don't know much about it.

To replace Clinton Newell they elected another man in the community, who I believe was retired.

Jacobson: The board has stayed pretty much the same, then.

Herrick: Yes. The only change was the death of Newell and the replacement with [Laine] Ainsworth. I think that is a mistake. For example, I think they would be helpless without Bill Picard. They need a doctor very badly. If something happened to Dr. Picard, a replacement, even if he were a doctor--and he should necessarily be a doctor--would have to become familiar with the whole setup before he could serve effectively.

Advisory Committee

Herrick: When I was first asked to be on the board--or, as you say, elected [laughs]--I mistook my assignment. I thought that I would be judging the merit of applications. The fact is that there are two bodies that control Hedco. One is the normal board of directors that meets annually, and the other is called the advisory committee. I guess the majority of the board members are on the advisory committee. I gather that they don't meet very often, but they talk a great deal over the telephone. They make the decisions for the contributions. A major contribution decision is submitted to me as a member of the board, but not a member of the advisory committee. I've never had such notification without agreeing with what they decided. They know that I'm not inclined to agree with everything all the time; I'm disinclined. I'm inclined to argue in general, but in the case of their judgments, I have agreed with them.

So I think they should increase the board. There's been only one change in sixteen years.

Jacobson: How small is the advisory committee?

Herrick: I don't know. I can only guess. I would guess that all four Dornsifes are on the advisory committee, certainly Bill Picard is, and probably Jim Little is, too. That'll interest them--that I didn't know and had to guess!

Recommendations Made by Board

Jacobson: What kinds of decisions are put to the board, then?

Herrick: You mean at the annual meetings? The annual meetings are generally a matter of review and very important. Subjects that came up--I've already mentioned one, telling them of the mechanical possibility that the handling of pass-through funds might be contrary to the policy of the board. Another suggestion I made was that they should have an executive director or some kind of director. For years and years they operated with no manager whatever. Mrs. [Ester] Dornsife was very busy; she was president, and has always been president of the board, and was handling all the details herself. It was I who suggested that Mr. Dornsife's secretary--at that time, and still, a woman named Mary Goriup--be the executive, and she's handled it very well. I've been very happy that she was assigned to that post. An interesting thing is that she doesn't meet with the board. I mentioned that, that she should, and I

still say that and it will go on record. [laughs] But for some reason they've decided against it.

Jacobson: They want to keep things very private.

Herrick: Yes. Oh, absolutely. That's consistent, isn't it? I mentioned the matter of going over the border in amounts of funds. They've also gone over the border in direct contacts with donees in a few cases--one at Stanford, for example.

Important Qualities in a Board Member

Jacobson: What qualities make for a good board member?

Herrick: I've thought of that a great deal in connection with corporate boards, and even studied and read on the subject. In the case of a foundation board, I think one thing that would be necessary would be a sense of proportion, which would mean that it would have to be someone who had been in a fair-sized enterprise. It's conceivable, for example, that a minister like Jim Little would not have any feeling for what \$500,000 looked like. By now he certainly has that feeling. But you might find a candidate for the board who had no investments and very little income, and could not think in terms of the size of donations.

Also you should have, it seems to me, a board member who is open-minded and avoids prejudices. Hedco, for example, has given without any second thought to Jewish people, like Mt. Zion, and to Catholic people--although Hedco is a distinctly Protestant group.

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Jacobson: You were talking about the importance of open-mindedness.

Herrick: Yes, I think that's very important. It's obvious, as you go through the record of foundations, that many of them have restrictions that are very severe and very handicapping. I would say that Hedco is superior because it has virtually no restrictions; I can't think of any.

Most foundations are testamentary; they're set up by a lawyer and his client, and they're not always wisely set up. In this case, this is not testamentary, and I guess a great deal of thought and preparation had gone into the founding of Hedco--again, maybe by the law office.

Jacobson: How has your experience in business helped you be a better board member?

Herrick: There are several reasons. One is the practical matter that you run into. I recall, for example, in one case we were asked to buy a piece of medical equipment, only to discover that the applicant had no place to put it and didn't know how to run it [laughs]. The experience on the foundation has led us to be careful of things of that type.

Influence of Board Member Interests on Grantee Selection

Jacobson: Your interest in cultural matters has brought potential grantees to the attention of Hedco. What about some of the other board members? Have their own particular interests guided--?

Herrick: That's a good question. For example, Mr. Ross has a close interest in a hospital in his community, and we have made a number of contributions to that hospital. Mr. Ainsworth is active in the YMCA in Oakland, and we made a contribution there. I have, of course, friends at UC Berkeley and at Stanford, and we've made contributions there. Aside from the medical end of Stanford, the library and so forth has not made a suitable application, so they haven't been given consideration. Both David Dornsife and Dorothy Jernstedt have shown interest in communities they live in, and contributions have been made.

I don't know how many applications would come through from Mt. Zion Hospital if I were not on the board. In other words, a director's interests are involved in most cases. There are some, as I say, that come in through the mail and are still perfectly appropriate.

Jacobson: Do those have as good a chance of getting through to the end?

Herrick: If the chance differs, it's because the officers and the members of the advisory committee can come to a director and ask questions. If it's somebody they don't know, they can do the same thing, but they don't know how reliable the answers are. Applications frequently, particularly for medical things, are not totally understandable. If they can come to me, then I can go to, say, Pacific Presbyterian Medical Center and ask, "Where are you going to put this equipment? Who's going to run it?" Some of the missing statements in the applications can be filled in. But if it's totally blind, they can still call a hospital, but they don't even know who to call or whether the answers are reliable.

Jacobson: So there's definitely an advantage to having a director carry it through.

Herrick: Yes. That's one rason I'd like to see the directorate increased--mainly to have spares. I'm eighty years old, and I'm not going to continue being a director forever.

Grantee Selection and Application Process

Jacobson: How are the grantees selected?

Herrick: The advisory committee is very uninterested in contributing to anything that involves overhead. As I said, they like to have an article which is defined and limited, that they can look at and see whether it's delivered and in operation and so forth. There have been cases--I was involved in one--in which they gave a good sum to a newly founded community operation. The money was seed money to get the operation going. I'm on the board of that grantee. It's the Meyer Friedman Institute, which is concerned with behavior modification as related to heart disease.

Jacobson: Do the advisory committee members select the grantees themselves, or do they review a set of applications?

Herrick: They review a set of applications, but some applications come through without any preliminaries. The applicants may read these reference books that I mentioned, or they may talk to other donees. At any rate, they come in blind. I try to confer in advance with people who want to make an application and advise them as to what size and character of application might be accepted. If I act in that way--and this applies to any director; if a director is involved early in an application, and the application is accepted, he becomes what I call a monitor.

There is a degree of management required between the donee and Hedco, generally connected with timing, payment for articles, and the installation. One assignment wherein I'm a monitor, or the director responsible, is to go and see that the article is as requested and is in operation, and that they are happy with it, and so forth. So I make one visit--usually one is ample--to each place. I have found that very interesting, because I learned about various medical pieces of equipment and so forth, such as electronic microscopes. We've given three of those, I think.

Jacobson: So one of the advantages of being a board member is that you get to learn all these things.

Herrick: There is a tremendous advantage. There are several, and I'm glad you brought that up. There's a tendency on the part of people who make applications to assume that I am the Hedco Foundation, and that the money that is contributed is from me or from my family. That's been consistently denied. Nevertheless, it's pleasant to be thought of as a substantial donor. They assume that I have more influence than I do have. The contact with the hospitals and the research medical people has been very instructive and very interesting.

Jacobson: You've been exposed to a whole new field.

Herrick: Exactly, and a fascinating one with the progress that's being made in medical methods and so forth.

Follow-up on Grantees

Jacobson: Does the Foundation follow through on grantees?

Herrick: Yes, they follow through over a period of several years. At the directors' meeting, every contribution which is completed is reviewed. If it's not completed, it's also reviewed; even when they are final and all money is contributed and spent, still a review goes on for a year or two. If a new piece of medical equipment is involved in which the applicant states that if they had the equipment they could succeed in certain research, the Hedco board and Hedco personnel are very interested in the results of that research. Did it succeed or not? Was it an advantage? I, for example, on two occasions have sent Hedco financial reports on the Meyer Friedman Institute to show that it still exists and is doing just what they proposed to do.

Jacobson: Then do they award another grant if the organization is doing well?

Herrick: That's quite a pertinent question. If an applicant succeeds, they of course have a tendency to go back for another load. The Hedco advisory committee has been so involved in these repetitive applications that they have set up a rule that there has to be a two-year gap between a grant and the following grant, if any.

Jacobson: When was that decision made? Was it made early on?

Herrick: No, it was made quite recently--certainly before November of '88; possibly before November of '87, because I've run into it a number of times. I remember in the meeting of November '88, I asked them to define it more carefully, because I was running

into it in connection with Pacific Presbyterian hospital, for example. Incidentally, there's another religious order, but I don't think the Presbyterians had much to do with Pacific Medical. In fact, they're shedding the name Presbyterian. I know the fundraiser very well, and he's very effective. He comes to see me quite often, so I have to drive him away. I have to know what the rules are; and he wants to know the rules.

Size of Grants

Jacobson: How do you make decisions about what size a grant should be?

Herrick: If a new applicant came along and made a justified but very substantial request, Hedco would be inclined to offer to give them half the funds on a matching grant basis. Like everybody else and all other entities, they have to watch the bank account. They obviously try to avoid giving all the money away at once [laughs]. On the other hand, they don't want to be bothered with tiny applications, you see. A perfectly justified application for one or two thousand dollars would be disregarded; it would be set aside.

They have a practice--a very good practice--of responding to every letter. The Oakland Boys' Club, for example, is one of the applicants that has been successful from time to time. But if, through misguidance, they said they wanted to make an application for a couple thousand dollars, it wouldn't be considered at all just because of the size. It's too much trouble. There are five or six people who have to be telephoned several times, you have to read the application, and the application has to be photocopied and mailed and so forth.

[looking over list of grants] Here's the Hayward Boys' and Girls' Clubs--\$5,000.

Jacobson: Is there a floor below which grants aren't made?

Herrick: No. I was surprised to find the \$5,000. Here's one of Dr. Picard's--the Bay Area Tumor Institute, about \$6,000.

Jacobson: So you do make small grants.

Herrick: That's about the smallest. There are none as small as \$5,000 except the one I mentioned.

Jacobson: Can smaller grants be made on a pass-through account basis?

Herrick: Oh, yes. In the case of the oral history of Father Monihan, I contributed \$1,000 through the pass through. That's what the woman who wrote me a letter (a woman I don't even know) suggested--that each of the people she wrote contribute a thousand dollars.

Jacobson: Has the matching grant been something that the foundation has always used, or is that relatively new for Hedco?

Herrick: Well, it's always available. I would say they don't use it except in a very limited way--not many times. For example, Pacific Medical has been asked to use that several times. They came to us with something called a slit camera, which I think was something like \$80,000. Hedco felt that they only wanted to contribute about \$40,000, and Pacific Medical said it would have no problem in getting the other \$40,000, which they did.

Annual Board Meetings

Jacobson: Are there discussions or debates at board meetings over who and how much?

Herrick: No. One amusing part of the meeting is where Mrs. Dornseife reads off some of the applications which are utterly ridiculous. Like a man in Los Angeles who obviously just wanted money to live on [laughs]--things like that. Or someone who had set up a community activity which had no merit whatever. It's a lighter part of the meeting.

Meetings last a very long time. We meet at nine-thirty, and we spend at least three hours. Then we have lunch and return for another hour or two. All day Saturday, really.

Jacobson: How is the meeting set up?

Herrick: Very formally. They follow the advice of the lawyer, obviously. The first meeting is a meeting of the foundation, and the second meeting is a meeting of the board and they elect officers and directors. It's all recorded. Mrs. Jernstedt is the recorder, and does a very fine job of it.

Jacobson: Then you proceed to reading the applications that have come in?

Herrick: There is a very thorough agenda drawn up, and I would know well in advance if I had to report, for example, on a piece of equipment that Mt. Zion wanted. One that I think of is the research being done at Mt. Zion on AIDS. There's a staff laboratory and a research doctor who had converted this

laboratory from some earlier work into an AIDS investigation. The whole laboratory had to be changed in character. The walls had to be plaster covered, the ventilation had to be changed, double doors had to be installed, and so forth, to avoid any problem of the virus escaping. That money was applied for and I went to see that it was done.

Jacobson: So individual board members are asked to report on various aspects?

Herrick: Yes. As I say, each board member serves as a monitor--my own term--and each of us has to respond. The application is made for a contribution, and it's accepted or denied. If it's accepted, then the money doesn't pass until the article is delivered and billed for. Then the money passes, and the foundation knows that the project is making progress. Frequently the report of the monitor-director at the annual meeting is on an inactive project where they've changed personnel, lost interest, or the article they wanted is no longer available--various reasons like that.

One requirement we make is that if there is a piece of equipment required, we get a firm quotation from the supplier so that we don't face changes in price during the perhaps six months between application and decision. If the price were to go up, the applicant would say, "Thanks for the \$100,000, but now it costs \$120,000. What do we do next?" We won't stand for that.

Jacobson: That's very wise to jump in so very far ahead.

Herrick: Sure. We have to. You see, not only do the directors volunteer, but the advisory committee volunteer, and they have a great deal of work to do--a lot of telephoning, reading, thought. Consequently, decisions can't be made overnight. On only one occasion was I told by the applicant--I guess that was Pacific Medical--that the price was going up; or that they had a special opportunity to buy the device for some reason, and the decision was made in three weeks. But that's very unusual. When I'm handling an applicant, I always tell them they can't expect an answer for six months at least.

Jacobson: There's an amazing amount of planning involved all the way along.

Herrick: Yes, and it's of concern to the applicant. If they can't get the money from Hedco, they have to apply to somebody else in many cases.

Jacobson: So the regular board meetings consist of presentations made by individual board members, the reading of the applications--

Herrick: No, just a very brief one-sentence, such as you have in this list [demonstrates]: "Mt. Zion hospital, a Beckman ultra-centrifuge, \$77,000." The board members would know what that was because they had bought other centrifuges; and the doctor is there and can answer questions if necessary.

Jacobson: Then is there discussion?

Herrick: By discussion, I think you mean argument or disagreement. I don't think that we've ever had a case where any director or member of the advisory committee says that he can't understand why we decided in favor of that instead of this, or anything like that. There's no jealousy or competition indicated whatever in the board meetings.

Jacobson: Then a primary function of that meeting is to just approve applications?

Herrick: No, it has nothing to do with that. The approval or disapproval of applications in all cases has already taken place.

Jacobson: Oh, by the advisory committee.

Herrick: Yes. They are either completed or not completed, or in progress, you might say.

One of the important headings in the board meetings is the financial report, indicating the total number of grants that have been made, how much remains for future contributions, estimates of how much contribution might be made by the corporation, and interest income, which is quite substantial.

Medical Grants

Jacobson: Can you talk a little about how the various fields of interest have developed? Looking over some of the grants I noticed there are some basic categories, like education and universities, music and the arts, and children.

##

Jacobson: Why don't we start with the medical, and maybe you can tell me about some of the grants that have been awarded.

Herrick: Let's review some more recent grants. This record ends two years ago, but it does give an idea of what's going on. The bottom one says, "Peralta (that's a hospital) Cancer Research Institute, fund research fellow in breast cancer studies." That was an unusual grant because that is contrary to what I mentioned, that they don't like money to go to salaries. But this one did go to salaries.

An earlier one is Alta Bates hospital, "mobile hyperthermia system for cancer treatment." That's a piece of equipment, and that was \$100,000. "ALS [Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (Lou Gehrig's Disease)] and Neuromuscular Research Center: equipment and lab reconstruction for ALS study by Dr. Forbes Norris." Hedco funds hospitals over and over again, and not always equipment--sometimes alterations of a building or something of that sort.

Jacobson: Or a research project?

Herrick: Well, if it were a research project it would not generally be salaries; it would be equipment or space.

Jacobson: The largest grants are medical, are they not?

Herrick: There is a very large grant involving a building at USC. Some of the funds came from Hedco and some came from a pass-through of the Dornsife family. It's far bigger than any we've ever had. It seems to me it runs over two million dollars, or even more than that, and it involves a matching grant. But that's very unusual.

Here's a \$225,090 item; \$124,000; \$250,000. That \$250,000, incidentally, was a fitness gym for a YMCA in Oakland.

University Grants

Jacobson: Let's talk about some of the grants to universities.

Herrick: There's no reluctance to do that. The big USC grant is university, of course. They are apt to be specific. The most successful one at Stanford is the research on immunology.

Jacobson: And at Berkeley?

Herrick: Well, the only ones at Berkeley are the Mark Twain grants, sponsoring two volumes and hopefully a third one.

Jacobson: Was that a pass through?

Herrick: No, it was a full grant. That's a good question, because you could well imagine that it was a pass through from my fund, but my fund was never as big as \$50,000. Jim [James D.] Hart has established the practice that a book will not be attributed to a foundation unless the contribution is \$50,000 or more. The \$50,000 doesn't anywhere near cover the cost of producing the book, but apparently it's a very important part of the cost.

Cultural Grants

Jacobson: Medicine and education were interests from the very beginning, but the arts and cultural fields were developed later?

Herrick: Yes. The first cultural grant was in 1981, for Life on the Mississippi.

Jacobson: Who were some of the other grantees after that?

Herrick: They've all come through me, and there aren't many [laughs]. Mills College has made application for both medical and non-medical needs which were accepted.

Jacobson: The Friends of The Bancroft Library, and some music groups.

Herrick: No, the music was pass through--Clarion Music [Society]. That was an orchestra that was founded by a friend that I met while I was living in New York. I met with their directors and attended many of their concerts. No, that's the only music one I can think of. You see, initiative can come from a director. I have friends at the San Francisco Symphony, and I could go to them and say, "Have you any special medium-sized need in which we could use Hedco?" But I've never done that.

Children's Welfare Grants

Jacobson: What about the interest in children's welfare?

Herrick: I don't know any director who can be identified with that interest, except as a general interest. I think possibly the Dornseife family is very interested in that field.

Jacobson: What kinds of grants have come under that?

Herrick: I remember we contributed money to improving buildings in schools.

Jacobson: I noticed boys' and girls' clubs.

Herrick: Yes. There are not a lot, but there are some. There are the Hayward Boys' and Girls' Clubs, and the Boys' Clubs sponsored by David Dornsife for rebuilding a swimming pool. I don't know why he's interested in it; he must have a friend there or something. Lincoln Child Center is another. Renovation of Vernon House; it's to be called Hedco House. That was sponsored by Mr. Ainsworth, \$71,000.

Jacobson: When Hedco puts its name on a building like that, which draws publicity to itself, is it discussed?

Herrick: I'm sure it was considered. It was not done in the early history. It's a requirement now. Take, for example, an electronic microscope; that has to have a plaque on it saying it was contributed by Hedco. So the name is really spread out a good deal. And it's one of the policies of Hedco, when they make a substantial or total contribution, that they be identified as the contributor. In fact, when they contribute only half or an even smaller proportion, they make the requirement that it be called the Hedco Room, or the Hedco Building.

Jacobson: Is that policy at odds with their desire to keep a very low profile?

Herrick: I never thought of it, but it certainly is probably at odds. I think they've given up on the low profile.

Jacobson: Are there any other fields of interest that have come up, other than those broad categories that we've mentioned?

Herrick: No, I can't think of any.

Managing the Foundation and Its Assets

Jacobson: Let's talk a little bit about the management of the foundation. You mentioned it a little bit in discussing the board meetings and the financial reports that are given, but I wonder if you could say more about exactly how the assets are managed. Who's in charge of doing that?

Herrick: There is a reserve, of course. The contributions of the corporations to Hedco are once or twice a year. Consequently, considerable sums are held, which are handled by Mr. Dornsife as the financial officer. They are placed with building and loan companies in CDs at considerable interest rates. In fact, they only used one building and loan, and at one meeting I suggested

that they might use two or three instead of just one for the sake of safety.

Jacobson: Are there any investment policies that are set out?

Herrick: No, it all goes into CDs with some building and loan company.

Jacobson: The attorneys played an important role in the early stages of Hedco?

Herrick: I made a supposition that the attorney's office had a good deal to do with the establishment of Hedco. But that was just a supposition, and aside from that I have no idea. The distribution of money comes from the law office, and all the mail from outsiders goes through the law office.

Jacobson: But as far as you know, that is the extent of their involvement?

Herrick: As far as I know, yes.

Jacobson: Is Mary Goriup the lone staff member?

Herrick: Yes, and her principal employment is as secretary to Mr. Dornside.

Jacobson: What are her responsibilities as the manager?

Herrick: [laughs] I don't know. I've talked to her over the phone occasionally. Recently I had to get a report on a Mills College application, so I phoned her and asked about it. Another application several years ago was lost. The applicant filed it and thought that it was being handled, and nobody knows what happened to it. They had to file it again [laughs].

Jacobson: How much time is devoted to the foundation by the board members?

Herrick: I think a great deal of time is devoted to Hedco by Mrs. Dornside. I don't think any of the rest of us has any great time involved. In my case, I don't suppose it takes more than a day a month; not even that--say a half a day a month on the average.

Long-Range Planning

Jacobson: Has the board tried to do any long-range planning?

Herrick: Yes. I noticed your note on your outline. Normally we only meet as a board once a year, but twice in the past and proposed in the future is a long-range planning meeting.

Jacobson: What kinds of issues come up?

Herrick: For example, the special project fund would be one--a change in policy in addition to education and health, with the consideration of other possible contributions.

Jacobson: In addition to the special project fund, have there been any other considerations for long-range planning?

Herrick: I don't know of any, but one could come up easily. It would depend on the interest of board members. For example, the Reverend Jim Little could probably think of other possibilities. But the term "special project" covers everything that is not health or education. You see, I thought initially it was just for cultural matters, but it's not.

Foundation's Relationship to the Community

Jacobson: In the fifteen years that you've been a board member, have you noticed a change in the way the foundation operates with respect to government regulations?

Herrick: No. I don't think regulations have changed. And due to the guidance of their law office and their public accountant, they're very careful to adhere to regulations. That's another point that might be made. Some foundations are very self-serving. The classic case was Louis Lurie, who tended to influence actions by the City, for example, by paying for scholarships for the children of city officers. That was in the paper, so I don't hesitate to mention it. And it was years ago. But it is a typical thing that could happen; foundation funds could be used for influencing community decisions and so forth.

Jacobson: To what extent does Hedco see itself as giving back to the community that the Herrick-Pacific Corporation has profited from?

Herrick: A good question. None whatever. I don't think that the public in general thinks of Hedco as being anything to do with Herrick-Pacific. The very nature of Herrick-Pacific is such that--for example, what they're interested in is being a low bidder on a steel contract. Nothing that Hedco could do would influence that ever. It's conceivable that the type of thing that occurred with Louis Lurie could take place, in that a favorite

employee of Herrick-Pacific could have a special interest, and in order to make him happy and retain him Hedco could make a contribution for that reason alone. It's conceivable, but they have never, to my knowledge, done anything like that.

As I said earlier, donees tend to think that I'm giving them money, unless I stop it as quickly as I can, and I think the community has gotten the idea pretty well. In fact, I was at a meeting of the board of the Meyer Friedman Institute, and they mentioned the source of contributions. They mentioned several foundations and so forth, including the Hedco Foundation, and a member of the board asked, "Who's the Hedco Foundation?" [laughter] I smiled, but it was explained by the president of the board.

Jacobson: Well, that speaks to some success in keeping a low profile, I guess.

Herrick: Yes, they've done the best they could.

Jacobson: Is any of the Hedco giving connected to ideas about "corporate citizenship"?

Herrick: No.

Evolution of Foundation

Jacobson: Let me ask you to reflect on your fifteen years, and ask you how ideas Hedco had about how they should be run and operated have changed over time, if at all.

Herrick: I'm so much removed from it that aside from annual meetings and phone calls, I can't speak authoritatively on that. I don't even know what Mary Goriup's duties are, for example. I do know that Mrs. Dornseife is very much occupied and very responsible for the whole operation.

Jacobson: Has her time increased over the years?

Herrick: Oh, I'm sure it has, yes. When they started, of course, they had very few funds. They made what now appear to be quite minor contributions at the very beginning. Now every year there are fifteen or twenty. It takes a lot of time. Let's count the ones for the year '86, for example: there were seven in '86. But they're increasing all the time. In '84 there were--well, that was a very busy year; there were fourteen grants approved in 1984. That would keep them all very busy.

Incidentally, in board meetings, when we felt there was a scarcity of suitable applications, there was almost a plea for the directors to go out and get some new ones quick!

Jacobson: That's a nice position to be in.

Herrick: Yes. We were amazed.

Transcriber: Judy Smith

Final typists: Keiko Sugimoto and Judy Smith



Stephen Gale Herrick in his office being interviewed by Lisa Jacobson, May 10, 1989.

TAPE GUIDE -- S. Gale Herrick

Interview 1: January 13, 1988		
tape 1, side A		1
tape 1, side B*		
tape 2, side A*		
tape 2, side B*		
Interview 2: January 21, 1988		9
tape 3, side A		9
tape 3, side B		19
tape 4, side A [side B not recorded]		39
Interview 3: January 28, 1988		49
tape 5, side A		49
tape 5, side B		59
tape 6, side A [side B not recorded]		68
Interview 4: February 4, 1988		69
tape 7, side A		69
tape 7, side B		77
Interview 5: February 18, 1988		86
tape 8, side A		86
tape 8, side B		94
tape 9, side A		102
Interview 6: May 10, 1989		106
tape 10, side A		
tape 10, side B		

*Major portions of Interview 1 (tape 1, side B and all of tape 2) were integrated into Chapters II and III (tapes 3 and 4).

APPENDIX TABLE OF CONTENTS--Stephen Gale Herrick

APPENDIX I--"The Herrick Family Pioneers," by Stephen Gale Herrick, May 5, 1982.	130
APPENDIX II--"Residences of Merritt F. Gale," by Stephen Gale Herrick, June 23, 1988.	134
APPENDIX III--"History of Herrick Steel Company," by Stephen Gale Herrick, April 1, 1955.	136
APPENDIX IV--"ROTC, UC Berkeley, 1927 and Later," by Stephen Gale Herrick, August 3, 1986.	151
APPENDIX V--Family Notes by Stephen Gale Herrick	155

May 5, 1982

THE HERRICK FAMILY PIONEERS

Dr. Stephen Herrick, my grandfather, moved with his entire family - consisting of a wife and five children - from New Orleans or Bay St. Louis to San Frarcisco in the mid-eighties. They traveled by railroad; my grandfather traveled with a substantial library of books and my grandmother, Julia, with her house plants.

I reviewed the San Francisco Street Directories of the time at the main San Francisco Public Library, in the Reference Department. These revealed some interesting history.

The family was not listed in the 1886 nor the 1887 Directory. In the volume 1888-1889 S.S. Herrick, my grandfather, was listed as

Physician, 2408 Folsom*
Assistant Secretary
Board of Health
Folsom and 22nd

No subsequent listing indicated these positions for him.

S. S. Herrick, Jr., also at 2408 Folsom, was listed in 1888 as being employed as a machinist at Palmer & Rey. The 1890 Directory listed 2410 Folsom as the family address.

*During this ninety years the numbering of houses on streets may have been changed, and even street names may have been changed - as in "Middle." Records at the California Historical Society would have to be examined.

From 1893 to 1895 the address was 240 San Jose Avenue, and in 1894 an office at 104 Sutter was indicated for Dr. Herrick. This was not listed in 1895. In 1896 and 1897 the family residence was at 322 Haight Street.

In 1898 a second child (of the five) was listed: my aunt Cora R. Herrick as a teacher at Monroe Primary School and living at 322 Haight. Until 1911 all members of the family apparently continued to live in the same residence.

In 1900-1901 another child, Clarence G. Herrick, was listed as residing in the Haight Street home and employed with Pacific Steam Whaling (!) Co. As long as Clarence was listed he changed employment every year.

Aunt Cora was transferred from Monroe to Lincoln Grammar School in 1901 and she moved away from the family home on Haight Street in 1911 to 429 Steiner and in 1912 to 32 Parnassus. She had continued residing with the family from Haight Street to 46 Alpine.

In 1905-1906 the family moved to "12 Middle."

In 1907-1908 my grandfather had apparently died. My parents were married and the family moved into the home my father designed and the house where I was born at 46 Alpine Terrace. The publisher of the Directories at last discovered that women existed (except for their listing Cora). They now listed my widowed grandmother Julia and my mother Mabel. My father dropped the Jr. designation.

The 1918 Directory lists my maternal grandfather, Merritt F. Gale, at 90 Divisadero Street and indicates Cora R. (Herrick) as his wife.

My father, S.S. Herrick, was employed for 18 years by the Vulcan Iron Works. This firm fabricated ornamental and structural iron and steel, and in addition manufactured and repaired refrigerators for steamships. He did not own the company and had little respect for the owners. His title with the company according to the Directories indicated advancement.

In 1890 he was clerk. By 1902 he was Superintendent and by 1907 Manager. In 1909 he was called Department Manager, which indicates, I assume, that the firm established a separate department and had to split the managerial function. However, by 1911 no title was indicated and in 1912 he was simply listed as "with" Vulcan Iron Works. Apparently there was some disagreement or conflict about this time, as he was demoted to Superintendent in 1913.

The plant, located near the Palace Hotel, was lost in the 1906 fire and my father arranged its re-establishment at the foot of Telegraph Hill. Prior to the 1906 earthquake and fire he had dreamed of starting his own business, but when the plant was destroyed he felt a responsibility for relocating it rather than allow the management, which he considered inept, to close Vulcan. As World War I approached he believed he could perform more effectively in the war effort in shipbuilding and, at the invitation of Joseph A. Moore, he resigned from Vulcan and worked at Moore Dry Dock Company (Moore and Scott) from 1918 to 1921, when he founded the Herrick Iron Works in Oakland.

LIST OF LOCATIONS:

HERRICK FAMILY RESIDENCES:

1888-	2408 Folsom at 22nd Street*
1890-	2410 Folsom Street
1892-1896	240 San Jose Avenue
1896-1905	322 Haight Street
1905-1907	12 Middle Street (now Orben Street)
1907-1918	46 Alpine Terrace

SEPARATE RESIDENCES OF CORA R. HERRICK:

1911	429 Steiner Street
1912	32 Parnassus Avenue
1918	90 Divisadero (as Mrs. Merritt F. Gale)

OFFICE OF DR. HERRICK:

1894 only	104 Sutter Street
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(Aside from this early office he apparently maintained an office in his home, but I was told his practice was not important.)

*Due to an error or a change in street numbering 2408 and 2410 Folsom are near the corner of 20th Street.

Residences of Merritt F. Gale According to San Francisco and Oakland Directories at the Periodical Room of the Main Library, San Francisco
 June 23, 1988 (Revised)

My mother's father was Merritt Foquet Gale. Mother was living with her parents in the 149 San Jose Avenue house when my father walked up the street in 1906 immediately after the earthquake and called on her, proposing marriage. Stephen Herrick was the only one of several suitors of my mother's to investigate how she fared in the earthquake. (The subsequent fire did not reach this area deep in the Mission District.) Stephen's proposal was accepted by Mabel and they were wed in 1907.

Prior to 1879 MFG was not listed. His first appearance was in the 1881/1882 Directory as Merritt F. Gale r. [residence] 316 - 18th Street. Now - in 1988 - the numbering starts at the Bay shore with Number 500, so I assume the address numbers were changed since 1880. Number 316 must have been near the waterfront and near Third Street - now east of Potrero Hill.

In the 1882/1883 Directory he was listed as "bricklayer, r. 1018 Treat" Avenue. Listing was the same in 1883/1884. Treat Avenue parallels Mission Street and is west of Potrero Hill.

The 1884/1885 Directory listed his residence as 17½ Rausch Street, which was an alley running from Howard to Folsom between 7th and 8th streets. This may have been the location of his office and yard, and not his residence. This was the year when he was first listed as "contractor." Rausch Street no longer exists.

In 1885/1886 his occupation was indicated as "contractor" and his residence at 907 - 23rd Street. He resided at this address until 1890. In 1886 and 1887 he was listed as "bricklayer" but from 1888 to 1890 as "contractor" again. This home must have been near the Treat Avenue house.

The 1891 Directory shows Merritt F. Gale "(Richardson & Gale) r. 123 San Jose" Avenue. (The appearance of an associate or partner - Richardson, who appeared in 1891 only - was never mentioned by my mother or my uncle.) This residence exists. Building numbers here have not been changed. In 1892 the address number is 149 San Jose Avenue. I remember this house. San Jose Avenue is a curving street in the Mission District. The BART system Glen Park Station would be close to Number 149 San Jose Avenue and near Mission

(more
 over)

Street. The residence at Number 149 has been replaced with a small apartment house but would have been only a few doors west of Number 123. In 1893 MFG was again listed as "bricklayer."

The 1914/1915 Directory shows his occupation as "Capitalist, 798 Post Street." This title may or may not have been accurate, but even today such listing would be unusual. The structure at Number 798 is a 44-unit apartment house called the Ross-Early. It is on the northeast corner of Post and Leavenworth streets. As I recall my uncle George T. Gale, son of MFG, was employed as Manager of this apartment house and probably the building belonged to my grandfather. If MFG owned the apartment building he was indeed a capitalist! It is likely that his profits on brick contracts for buildings replacing those destroyed in the 1906 disaster were sufficient to acquire the land and build the apartment house.

In 1919 the listing was "Merritt F. (Cora R.) Gale 90 Divisadero." This is near the corner of Duboce Street. An eight-unit apartment house stands at this address and it must have been new when MFG and Cora moved into it. Over the entrance is a stucco medallion with two cupids or angels. Very appropriate for the newlyweds! This address is only a block from 46 Alpine Terrace which was the Herrick family home at the time and which had been Cora's residence. With the first appearance of the name of his second wife, Cora, it is indicated that his first wife, my grandmother, must have died during the First World War.

"Cora R." is Cora Ruth Henrietta Herrick, born 1876, who was my father's sister. She was a schoolteacher. This marriage has always been difficult to explain to outsiders as to the relationships. My paternal aunt, Cora, married my maternal grandfather, Merritt Gale; thus her relationship to me was both aunt and step-grandmother.

The 1919 listing was the final San Francisco address for MFG. The Oakland Directory of 1921 lists "M.F. Gale - 5561 Thomas." (Note that Cora was not listed. Directories often omitted the name of a woman living at an address.) The Thomas Street address was only a block from 5515 Carlton Street in Oakland where our family lived during my 'teen years. These homes were near Broadway and Monroe Street in Oakland. My parents visited the Gales frequently.

Stephen Gale Herrick

HISTORY OF HERRICK IRON WORKS
By Gale Herrick 4/1/55

To understand Herrick Iron Works and its history, it is necessary to first know something of the character of its founder and, for many years, sole owner, Stephen S. Herrick. He was born in Louisiana in 1870. His mother was a Southerner and his father a Northerner who studied medicine at Dartmouth and was practicing medicine when Stephen was born. The South was poor and medicine was not a money-making profession at that time and in that place. The family was not well off. There were five children.

In 1888, they moved to San Francisco - following the move of friends to the Bay Area and apparently, in search of greater opportunity. It was necessary for my father to go to work immediately. He had started work much earlier in the South. His education consisted of partial grammar school attendance. He subsequently studied with the International Correspondence School and, like his father, was a great reader.

In San Francisco, he worked briefly for an organ manufacturer and a machine shop, but soon went to work for the Vulcan Iron Works which was a foundry and, at one time or another and to one degree or another, fabricator of ornamental iron and structural steel for buildings, ice making machinery for ships, hotels, and other commercial establishments, and produced miscellaneous castings. He worked for this company for more than twenty-five years. (I picture it as a small company employing fifty to one hundred persons.) It was a partnership and was

neglected by the owners who were not particularly competent. Soon, through his industry and ability, he impressed the owners that he was able to take charge of operations. At the time of the great San Francisco fire and earthquake in 1906, he related that the owners ~~were~~ ready to abandon the business but he foresaw the opportunity created by the fire and persuaded them to relocate in the vicinity of Telegraph Hill. He soon became General Manager but his position and responsibility were never recognized.

Even as early as 1906, he was considering going into business for himself. He had saved money all his life and in about 1915 felt he had enough money and the time had come, but a crisis in his employers' business and finally, the outbreak of the first World War, caused him to delay founding his own business.

When the United States entered the War, he resigned from the Vulcan Iron Works to go to work for his old friend, Joseph A. Moore, as assistant superintendent, in what is now the Moore Dry Dock Company. Mr. Joseph A. Moore was the superintendent. In 1919, when shipbuilding ceased, the Company made a gesture toward organizing a structural steel fabricating department. In 1921, they decided to dispose of the department and offered it to my father and another man. (I presume Moore's motive for disposing of the department was to demonstrate to the Government the low value of some of its assets.)

The opportunity for acquiring a going business was an

excellent one and I have no doubt the price was low. Although there was another man involved as a partner, before the first year was over, he had been bought out and, from early in 1922 to 1941, my father was sole proprietor.

The entire Department at Moore Dry Dock Company involved in the fabrication of structural steel transferred to the Herrick Iron Works on November 16, 1921. This involved both the production force and the office personnel occupied in that Department. The plant and office were leased from Moore. Within approximately a year, the quarter square at the southwest corner of Eighteenth and Campbell Streets, Oakland, was acquired and a wooden building, dismantled at Moore's, was erected at this site. This is still used and is called the North Bay. A temporary office was erected and the plant moved to this locality. Subsequently, the office used at the Moore plant was moved intact to this location and was used until 1937, with certain additions and alterations. The principal product of the Company was structural steel. For its size, it was exceedingly ambitious. During the twenties, we fabricated many service stations for Shell Oil Company. This type of construction is lighter than structural steel, and was a little different from the present service station construction. Our contract included wood doors, etc., as well as steel.

From 1922 until 1937, my father used a table and roll-top desk in the middle of the office space where he could see all visitors and the coming and going of all shop men. His desk

chair was located approximately 30' from the riveting crew which certainly indicates high powered concentration on his part. When it was necessary for him to indulge in private conversation, he would ask the person to retire to his automobile.

The time of the founding of the Company was at the commencement of a building boom and, although the organization was a modest one, the attitude of my father was distinctly aggressive. He did not take his limitations of capacity very seriously and sometimes found himself working three shifts (and sometimes at an inefficient rate), but he had the satisfaction of accomplishment. A characteristic of building in the twenties was poor financing and during this period, the Company experienced some serious credit losses. Gradually, other property was acquired and improved until, now, over one and one-half squares are owned and utilized at the same location.

In 1930, the Company was low bidder on the structural steel frame of the Ford Motor Company assembly plant in Richmond, California. This amounted to approximately 3,500 tons. Although I have no doubt we could perform it more economically and, consequently, the competition would be severe. The contract included not only fabricating the structural steel, but also erecting it. Its performance strained every facility of the Company. The fall off of the economy at that time had certain favorable results. The most skilled workers were readily available and the price of material had a tendency to drop. Although I was not employed by the Company until immediately

after completion of this contract, it is well known that the work was done to the satisfaction of the owner and general contractor and resulted in a small profit to the Company. Other medium sized contracts followed, but in 1932 there was a short period when there were no productive workers employed. During this period, the shop was occupied by the foreman-superintendent and the maintenance man only. The entire drafting force had been discharged and the chief engineer was on a part-time schedule.

In September, 1931, following my graduation from the Civil Engineering Department of the University of California and a brief trip to Europe, I was employed by the company. At first my job was that of apprentice ironworker, and for over three months I followed this occupation learning and performing many of the operations of steel erection. My switch from this department to office work came about due to our running out of steel erection work. When I was employed in the office and about the time I was married, my salary was \$15 a week. It was implied that the company might not even be able to continue this arrangement although actually I was never laid off.

My younger brother, Merritt Herrick, who was almost two years younger than I, did not continue at college and, consequently, went to work for the company before I did. His employment commenced some time in 1930.

For the next several years, my work at the company involved almost every operation with few exceptions. I had previously done manual work in the shop before leaving school and due to my

engineering education, I was able to do design work and make working drawings. I also performed sales, accounting, and other work; and due to the slackness, there were opportunities to perform functions that were usually done by Department Heads. My first important job was that of erection superintendent which involved the organization and operation of several field jobs at the same time, and sometimes included the employment and supervision of twenty to thirty men. By 1939, my position was that of General Manager, but I did not have all the functions of General Manager as my father retained many of them.

About 1937, we had our first opportunity to bid on a large contract for hangar doors. These were for McClellan Field near Sacramento and were motor operated. It was my father's wish that we bid on them although the contract was a large one and the accuracy of work called for was very high. It also required our subcontracting the motor operation to a firm in Detroit not previously known to us. We had almost no experience in this line. The decision was made by my father - I opposed it. The contract was performed successfully. It not only involved very careful fabrication, but also the transportation of very large pieces from here to Sacramento, and the installation and erection of these pieces with their motor operators. Not only are structural steel members involved in hangar doors, but also rubber weather stripping, steel sash, glass, putty, and bronze and brass closures.

As a further diversification, in 1938 we entered the

reinforcing steel field aggressively. We had previously stored a small supply of this material and sold it to small general contractors without any labor being involved. Due to the encouragement of the Columbia Steel Company, we made the decision to enter this field. Columbia was apparently troubled by the competition of Bethlehem which not only rolled reinforcing steel, but also fabricated and installed it. The operation prospered until 1942 when we found it necessary to abandon it temporarily because of Government restrictions reducing construction to a minimum. We were able to occupy our full capacity in the fabrication of structural steel for ships and other war materials.

The pre-war and war period, of course, presented unlimited opportunities for producing our established products as well as more diversified lines. In the first stages (which included 1940, 1941, and 1942), our activities in providing steel for buildings increased rapidly. During this period, we supplied hundreds of hangar doors for Government projects in the Pacific. The photograph most frequently used in illustrating the Pearl Harbor damage on December 7, 1941, included one of our door installations at the Pearl Harbor Base. In 1943, 1944, and 1945, the production of steel for buildings was reduced considerably and we were occupied with various steel products for military use. It was our policy to adhere as closely as possible to our normal product line but, of course, conditions required considerable divergence. Many of our competitors chose to

produce finished vessels such as landing craft, and some went even further afield. Our own major products were ramps for pontoon units, bottom sections for LSRs, welded plate rudders for freighters, and completely prefabricated superstructures for freighters. One contract involved the fabrication of ship sections of over 30' minimum horizontal dimensions which had to be transported to the Richmond Kaiser Yard.

The facilities for financing, both for working capital and for capital expenditures, were almost unlimited during this period, nevertheless, it was company policy not to utilize the easy financing offered by the Government. Based on this easy financing, several of our competitors expanded their plants. This was not the case with Herrick Iron Works. The most recent major construction effecting productive capacity was completed before the end of 1939.

Upon the war's end, we went through the same cycle of sudden cessation of Government work, followed shortly by a surprising and almost equally sudden increase in construction activity. We promptly reorganized the Reinforcing Steel Department, but for a number of years the Department was mismanaged which resulted in the slowing down of its growth and development. There was ample structural steel sold and it was generally profitable.

In November, 1947, the founder and president, S. S. Herrick, died after an illness of three weeks. Up to this time, he had hardly missed a day's work in his life. The stock of the corporation was owned 70% by him, 20% by me (Stephen G. Herrick),

and 10% by my brother, Merritt Herrick. At a special Board meeting following the death of my father, I was elected President. At this time, Merritt Herrick was elected Vice President and General Manager (he was already Secretary), and Ernest W. Richards was appointed Production Manager, and subsequently elected Vice President. Prior to this time, Merritt Herrick had been Assistant General Manager and Mr. Richards Shop Superintendent. Mr. Arthur Balwick replaced Mr. Richards as Shop Superintendent at this time.

Shortly after becoming President, I found a brief notice in the Wall Street Journal about a construction job in Pocatello, Idaho. The construction was to be performed by a firm we had never heard of, but the Sales Manager, based on the newspaper clipping, wrote the Philadelphia concern asking for permission to bid on the project. Entirely through a written bid and subsequent telephone conversations, we succeeded in landing the structural steel, reinforcing steel, and corrugated iron sheeting contract for the Phosphorous Plant of Westvaco Chemical Products at Pocatello. This and subsequent sales in connection with the same project in 1948 and 1949 totaled over one million dollars. The company performed the installation of all these products and a substantial portion of the field work took place in one of the most severe winters known to the region. Our field crews operated in sub-freezing temperature with a high blizzard and deep new snow much of the time. Our relationship with the Philadelphia contractor and the owners was excellent. Steel was

very hard to obtain and the delivery requirements of the job were stringent. We performed to the satisfaction of everyone and were able to net a profit. This was our first major construction project at a considerable distance from the plant - Pocatello is nearly one thousand miles from Oakland. On two other occasions, since this job was completed, we have attempted similar work. The first was at the Dugway Base in Utah, in which we took a reinforcing steel contract, including installation, but this job resulted in a considerable loss. The second was the Stauffer Chemical Plant near Salt Lake City, completed in 1953, and involving many of the same products that the Pocatello job included. In this instance, we made a modest profit. On both the Westvaco and Stauffer jobs, we bid in competition to Consolidated Western Steel and other large competitors.

Our former Sales Director, Mr. L. A. Peck, returned to the company early in 1949, having spent about three years at Judson Pacific-Murphy, our nearby competitor. Soon after returning, he urged us to re-organize the Reinforcing Steel Department, pointing out that success in this operation depended substantially on volume and that unless we were organized to do a considerable volume, profit was hopeless. He also pointed out the long term program by the State to improve and increase the penitentiary facilities. In the past, the firm had performed jail and prison work, but to a very small degree. The first prospect was a large one, the Soledad medium security prison. Our total contract was for \$543,510. Various features of prison

work tend to limit the number of contractors in the business. One is the availability of locks and locking devices, another is the ability to handle special metals such as ribbed grille bars and tool resistant steel. Perhaps even more important is the risk of making an estimate on a large project with no experience on which to base a price. Nevertheless, we were successful in obtaining a sub-contract for all the steel at the Soledad prison. This was a successful operation.

In preparing the estimate for Soledad prison, we proposed to obtain the locks from the Pacific Electric Manufacturing Company which had manufactured locks and locking devices throughout the 1930's, but who had not produced any for several years. We approached this firm and proposed that we use their products on the future prison program for the State on which we were successful and they were agreeable to going back into the business. The cost of the locks for this prison was estimated in excess of \$100,000, and we used their price in our estimate. After certain deliberation and delay, the State flatly refused to accept the product of the Pacific Electric Manufacturing Company and we fell at the mercy of the established lock manufacturers, of which there are only about five in the country. State drawings and specifications indicated as strongly as they could that they wanted the products of the Folger Adam company. Practice, and perhaps the law, requires the State to allow a substitute; in this case, they would not accept any substitute, so we were limited to an approach to Folger Adam. This was

14.

performed by Mr. Peck and me, visits were made to the western representative of the manufacturer, and finally a meeting was arranged with the proprietor. We succeeded in buying the locks at a price less than the allowance in the estimate and have continued a very harmonious relationship with this manufacturer ever since. From 1949, every new prison or large improvement to an existing prison has included Herrick Iron Works steel and Folger Adam locks. It has been a substantial and profitable portion of our business. In addition to State penitentiaries, we are extending our activity to city and county jails as well as the penitentiaries of other states. We are now performing a large subcontract on a penitentiary for the State of New Mexico. This includes installation and, although not complete, we expect to make a profit. We have a crew of four to six men in New Mexico at this time.

In June, 1950, when the Korean war started, we were fortunate in not having any critical commitments for material, etc., so the sudden scarcity of steel and increase in cost did not affect us substantially. Because of a conviction that the war would not be a major one, nor of considerable duration, and because of our disagreeable experiences in renegotiation following the second world war, we estimated a policy of seeking a minimum of Government war work. This was adhered to and the company was able to operate at reasonable volume during the period. Since 1946, none of the operations of the company have been renegotiated.

For five years, the company operated with Merritt Herrick as Vice President and General Manager. I felt it was apparent that the position was not adequately filled, by my brother, and that the company was handicapped by having him in this position. I was faced with a very difficult situation and continually delayed bringing it to a head. Finally, on about the fifth anniversary of our taking our positions at the head of the company, I had a series of grave discussions with my brother pointing out to him that he was obviously not happy in his position and that he was not properly filling the position. In addition, I told him what I considered was necessary on his part to fill the position as to time spent and interest shown as well as what was required in his personal development. These discussions were not heated and he was inclined to agree on the principal points I made. The first conclusion was that he would exert every effort to improve himself and to fill the position in which he found himself. It was agreed that we would review his progress at stated intervals and that the matter would be re-examined at the end of a year. A week after this conclusion, he resigned from the company. The position of General Manager has not been filled by a single person. The function has been covered by a Management Committee as may be seen in the organization chart.

The passing of the fifth anniversary of the present management's taking over control served to remind us that the time had come for a more aggressive attitude toward operating the company. Not only was my father's Estate fully settled and

operating smoothly, but I had become accustomed to my position as President. About this time, the decision was made to acquire the real estate and its improvements, which were occupied by the corporation, from the Estate of S. S. Herrick. This was done in order that control of the occupancy would be with the corporation and not (ultimately) by outsiders. When the decision was made, the company was already borrowing money for operating funds so it was necessary to finance this purchase by medium term financing.

The feeling that my apprenticeship had been served as President resulted in my making the decision to acquire the property as well as to improve it. We have always been aware of a weakness in plant layout. This is caused by an assumption in the original plant layout that we would not expand substantially. It was doubtless also influenced by the need to economize and "making things do". As a result, our plant layout is inefficient. The Engineering Department was asked to make a study of faults in our plant. This was the weakness in our Painting and Shipping layout which is carried on in the area at the Southwest corner of Eighteenth and Campbell Streets. This project required consideration of the entire plant layout and a new plan was made, complete with engineering drawings and soil tests.

This addition has not yet been started because in May of 1954, we commenced negotiations with Gilmore Fabricators for acquisition of their facilities at Middle Harbor Road. The proposal was to buy the plant and equipment and lease the real

estate - payments were to be made over a twenty year period. the plan at that time was to continue to occupy our present plant and to expand into the Gilmore plant. It was thought that with very little increase in the general, sales, and administrative organization, a substantial increase in sales volume and production could be brought about. It was the opinion of the Board and Management that we had a well established and competent organization and sufficient financing for this step. We also believed there would be ample demand for this capacity in the foreseeable future. The Gilmore plant complimented ours. There was a great deal of space and heavy lifting capacity. Our present facilities preclude our performing highway overpass and bridge contracts due to the size of our bays and the capacity of our cranes. Much of the Gilmore equipment did not duplicate ours and were machines we realized we needed. The acquisition of the Gilmore plant would provide us with space and equipment for a full line of fabricated structural steel. It would also relieve the crowding in the office as well as the shop. The Board approved the continued negotiations by the President. The plan was abandoned in September, 1954, as it was determined that the real estate owner, Western Pacific Railroad Company, would not lease the land for a period exceeding five years at one time.

The result of these two decisions, which in part are conflicting although both tend toward improvement and enlargement, was that the Board and Management were convinced that greater consideration should be given to our future goals.



NROTC - UC Berkeley - 1927 and Later

Stephen G. Herrick, Class of 1931

When I was in high school I was in the ROTC program all four years and enjoyed the military activity. So when I entered the University in the autumn of 1927 I signed up for Naval ROTC. And as you note on your 1 July letter, Captain Nimitz as the commanding officer had launched the first NROTC program, a year earlier at UC. Learning to know Captain Nimitz was a great experience, and as you will see later I took advantage of my familiarity and friendship with him. I enjoyed Naval ROTC and became commanding officer in my senior year - that is, commanding midshipman officer. I also formed friendships in the Naval ROTC - one which I still enjoy with Dr. Tracy Cuttle, who became a Naval doctor. Another friend in the service was Dr. Roberts Varney.

The summer cruises were a great event in my student life. We cruised to Hawaii in the summer of '28 and to Victoria in the summer of '29. The privilege of becoming a passenger on Naval vessels during the summer was quite enjoyable, and I took considerable advantage of it. I recall, for example, training in a crew simulating the firing of a 16" rifle. I also recall sleeping in a hammock, and as I turned over during the night I fell flat on the deck - entirely uninjured but startled! One of the pleasures I enjoyed was the jokes pulled by the crew on this new "animal", NROTC midshipmen. They could not get in their minds as to whether we were officers or noncoms or enlisted men, so their treatment of us was somewhat irregular. They enjoyed practical jokes with us as victims. For one thing they told us to be sure to wear clean underwear when we were firing guns, indicating that we might be embarrassed should we injure ourselves and have to be taken to the sick bay.

Not only did I enjoy the regulation summer cruises but I was also able to apply for individual cruises on Naval vessels. I learned that the USS Texas, which was

the flagship of the Pacific Fleet, was sailing from San Francisco to Brooklyn Navy Yard and thence to New London. I applied for a passage on that vessel and was given permission to sail via the Canal to Brooklyn Navy Yard. On board the Texas I was assigned to the navigation officer's watch and I learned to use the sextant and Bowditch. I still have my daybook record. I was quartered in the junior officers' quarters and they became very friendly. Noting my enjoyment of Naval life, they proposed that I apply for entry into Annapolis; I objected that it was too late for me to do so and very difficult to get in, but they stated that there was no problem at all and they would see that I became an Annapolis student! When I landed in New York I wrote my father and said that I'd changed my mind and would cease studying engineering at Berkeley and would apply for entry to Annapolis. He wrote me the only letter which I had ever received from him, stating that his plans for my life did not include the Navy - that he had founded the steel fabricating company in 1921 and would not have done so had he not expected me to succeed him. This, of course, was the reason he had insisted that I study Civil Engineering at UC.

I lived on board the Texas in Brooklyn Navy Yard for three weeks and attended plays in New York almost every night through the convenience of the subway. I remained on board when the vessel went on to New London and visited that port. A neighbor of my parents had arranged for me to return to San Francisco on the Army transport Chateau-Thierry, ranking as an able-bodied seaman. My duties consisted mainly of polishing brass, which I have avoided ever since.

After the summer of 1928 on the Texas I took subsequent cruises. The most notable one was a cruise in December 1930 in which I boarded a destroyer for San Diego. There I reported to Captain Nimitz, who was then in command of a submarine squadron and was quartered on a submarine tender ship. He arranged for an exciting flight on a Naval plane and subsequently two days on a submarine

during the annual exercise and test. My cot was in the same space as the torpedoes, and needless to say that was an experience to remember.

Following graduation in 1931 and attaining the rank of Ensign, my name was on a Reserve's mailing list of the Naval Department. Unfortunately the information mailed out was uninteresting and did not stimulate an interest in continuing in the Naval Reserve. Gradually the Naval Department realized that war was coming and that the Naval Reserve would be of some use. The mailings from the Department became more interesting and a Captain Allen was assigned to the 12th Naval District. His mission was apparently to organize the inactive Naval Reserves in the area. Captain Allen's lectures were fascinating, and the meetings, which were regular - I've forgotten whether they were weekly or monthly - created considerable interest in the Navy. I recall one series of meetings wherein an engineer from Pacific Gas & Electric Company lectured on Naval regulations, which one would think perhaps the dullest of all possible subjects, whereas this reserve from PGE made Naval regulations very interesting.

At this time I was promoted to Lieutenant Junior Grade in the Reserve. At my father's steel fabricating business I had become General Manager and we were producing various steel articles for war use. I received my orders to Naval duty at a cable station in Marin County and referred the matter to Captain Allen, asking him what I should do and explaining that I was doing war work as a manager of a steel company. He agreed that I might consider resignation from the Reserves and told me that I would have to fly to Washington, consult a commander in the Bureau of Personnel and explain my dilemma. The Department agreed to allow me to resign but pointed out that I would then be subject to the draft. That was a risk I had to take. In fact our plant worked more and more on sections of landing craft and even sections of ships that were being built in the Kaiser yards in

- 4 -

Richmond and Marinship, and I was never drafted for the armed services.

The Navy gets in one's blood, and I've always had a great affection for the service as a result of my great experiences as a Naval ROTC. Even my vacations are on pleasure cruises by choice!

Stephen G. Herrick

August 3, 1986

APPENDIX V--Family Notes by Stephen Gale Herrick

For the record: I am happily married and we will celebrate our fiftieth anniversary in 1992. Both Marion Schaller Herrick and I were born in San Francisco. If I am asked whether I have any children I answer proudly that I have five children. If Marion is asked, she answers, "Yes, three children." People assume that adds up to eight children, but that is not correct. My first marriage, in 1932, to Elizabeth Daniel ended in divorce in 1940. The two children of that marriage are Ann Clark and Stephen Brooks Herrick, and the children of my second marriage are Michael and Jerome Herrick and Andrea Viel. All five of the children live in the Bay Area.

Evidence of symmetry is the existence of ten grandchildren: two to each child. The people of my generation brag about the number of great-grandchildren in their family. Sadly I have no great-grandchildren at present.

Marion and I graduated from UC Berkeley. Two children are Berkeley graduates and two are Stanford alumni. We spread our business out evenly.



INDEX--Stephen Gale Herrick

Ainsworth, Laine, 111, 114, 122
 Alcatraz Prison, 61
 Ames Laboratory, hangar doors
 built at, 64-65
 Associated General Contractors,
 54
 Balwick, Arthur, 73
 Bechtel, 46, 57, 66
 Bethlehem Steel Company, 20, 40,
 46, 54, 65, 67
 bidding, 19, 32-34
 blueprinting, 26-27
 book collecting, 6, 86-91
 book collecting organizations,
 92-95
 bookbinding, 95-99
 Booz, Allen, and Hamilton survey,
 71, 75, 79-80
 Cahill, 66
 Carquinez Bridge, 44
 Chamberlain, Miss [teacher], 5,
 6
 Chambers, Robert, 63
 Columbia Steel Company, 46, 65
 Consolidated Western, 78
 corrugated iron, 60, 75
 Crandall, Miss [teacher], 5, 6
 Department of Justice lawsuit,
 66, 67
 Depression, the, 23-25, 42
 Derleth, Charles, 7, 44
 Dinwiddie, 66
 Dornsie, David, 111, 114
 Dornsie, Ester, 109, 112, 118,
 124, 126
 Dornsie family, 106, 107, 108,
 110, 111
 Dornsie, Harold, 41, 71, 76,
 79, 80-83, 106, 109, 123

earthquake and fire [1906], 11,
 12-13
 employee compensation, 31-32
 estimating, 34-35
 Everson, William, 6
 Ferry Building, interior
 renovation, 60
 field ironworkers, 27, 28, 50-
 51
Flatland, 6
 Ford assembly plant job, 19, 22-
 23, 60
 General contractors, 46-47, 54,
 66, see also Associated General
 Contractors
 Gillig Company, 3
 Golden Gate Bridge, 44
 Goriup, Mary, 112, 123-124, 126
 government-financed projects,
 42-44
 hangar doors, 59, 60, 64
 Hayward plant, 75-76, 84-85
 Hedco Foundation, 106-126
 advisory committee, 111-112,
 115, 119-120
 board of directors' meeting,
 112, 118-120
 board members, 110-111, 113,
 114, 124
 grant selection and size, 114-
 117, 120-123
 low profile of, 110, 122-123,
 125
 management of, 123-124
 relationship to community, 124-
 125
 Herman, Etta, 16, 37
 Herrick family residences, 1, 2-
 3, appendix

Herrick, Stephen Gale,
 assuming the presidency of
 Herrick Iron Works, 70-71
 boyhood interests, 5-6
 book collecting and bookbinding
 interests, 86-99
 childhood, 2-3
 college education, 7-9
 early work, 4
 family background, 1-2
 management responsibilities,
 36
 music interests, 102-105
 theater activities, 99-102

Herrick Holding Company, 81

Herrick Iron Works, 4
 as viewed by competitors, 77
 board of directors, 62-63
 founding, 16
 Oakland plant, 22, 70
 sale of, 79-81
 second-hand equipment used by,
 15, 20

Herrick, Merritt, 36, 40, 70-71

Herrick, Stephen Scholes, 1-2,
 3-4, 10-15, 36-40, 78
 conservative management style,
 17-18
 entrepreneurial qualities, 14-
 15

Herrick-Pacific Corporation,
 106-107, 125
 hiring policies, 55

Hoffman Ironworks, 66

Hoyem, Andrew, 6

impact wrench, 44

Industrial Accident Commission,
 29

Ironworkers' union, 24-25, 28,
 45, 50-53, 54, 55, 64, 83-84

Japan, steel purchased from, 41

Jernstedt, Dorothy, 111, 114,
 120

Judson Steel (Judson Pacific
 Murphy), 48, 66, 74, 75

Kaiser, 40, 46, 65, 66-67, 68-
 69, 79
 Kaiser shipyard, 68-69
 Korean steel fabricators, 49
 Korean War, 73-74, 75

Labor negotiations committee,
 49-50
 labor negotiations, 25, 45-58
 labor unions, 24-25, 83-84
 lien law, 21-22
 Little, James S., 111, 112
 Lurie, Louis, 125

Marinship plant, 68, 69

McClintock-Marshall, 65

mill buildings, 78

Mock, Jane. [Moore], 3

Montgomery, Guy, 9

Mooney, Thomas, 84

Moore Drydock Company, 3, 13-14,
 17, 18, 20, 70, 78

Moore, James, 3

Moore, Joseph A., 13

Moore, Joseph A., Jr., 3

Morrison Room, University of
 California, Berkeley, 7-8

Newell, Clint, 111

non-union operations, 49, 55

Nucor Steel Company, 14

Oakland Technical High School, 5

Opera House, 42

Operating engineers' union, 56-
 58

overtime pay, 31-32

pass-through account, 107-108

Peck, L.A., 73

Picard, William, 111, 112, 117

prison construction, 61-62

project financing in the 1920s,
 21

reinforcing steel business, 63-
 66, 74

reinforcing steel department
 reorganization, 73, 75

Richards, Ernest W., 73
 Ross, Gerald, 111, 114
 ROTC, 9

Safety Committee, 29, 30
 San Francisco City and County jail, 61-62
 San Jose Ironworks, 66
 Schrader Iron Works, 66
 scrap metal, 41-42
 Shell Oil contracts, 18-19
 shop labor, 49-51
 site inspections, 62
 Soper, James, 110
 Soule steel company, 75
 steel mills, 77, 79
 steel purchasing, 40-41
 steel shortages, 74
 steel workers' union, 24, 46, 53-54
 structural steel, complex fabrication work, 59-60
 detailing and design, 26, 27
 use in homes, 19-20
 structural steel fabrication industry, competitive materials, 46, 51
 competition and competitors, 20, 51, 66-67, 77-78, 79
 credit privileges given by large corporations, 65
 impact of the Great Depression on, 23-25
 price fixing, 65-66
 technological changes, 28, 56, 57-58, 83-84
 Swanson, Mr. [union negotiator], 56-57

U.S. Steel, 20, 40, 43, 46, 65, 67, 78
 United Engineers and Constructors, 71, 72
 United States Supreme Court, 78
 University of California, Berkeley, 7-9
 University of California, Department of Commerce, 36

Vale Press Shakespeare, 7-8
 Vietnam War, 74
 Vulcan Iron Works, 10-12

Wall Street Journal, 71
 wartime contracts, 68-70
 welding, 44
 Westvaco phosphorous plant, 71-72
 Whitcomb Hotel meeting (1932), 45
 Williams, Mr. [Herrick Iron Works employee], 16, 27
 William som, Talcott, 5
 wired concrete tanks, 60, 75
 workers' safety, 29-31
 World War I, 13, 70
 World War II, 68-71, 74

Young Presidents' Organization, 63, 79, 83



Ruth Teiser

Grew up in Portland, Oregon; came to the Bay Area in 1932 and has lived here ever since. Stanford, B.A., M.A. in English, further graduate work in Western history. Newspaper and magazine writer in San Francisco since 1943, writing on local history and economic and business life of the Bay Area. Book reviewer for the San Francisco Chronicle since 1943. As correspondent for national and western graphic arts magazines for more than a decade, came to know the printing community.



Lisa S. Jacobson

Born in San Francisco. B.A. cum laude, Pomona College, majoring in history; studied at Oxford University. Experience in market research and museum research.

Editorial assistant and alumni news editor, Public Affairs Office, Pomona College.

Research manager, interviewer, editor, and writer with private oral history organization, specializing in business history. Since 1986, researcher, interviewer, and editor with Regional Oral History Office, in fields of business history, wine industry, and social history.



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